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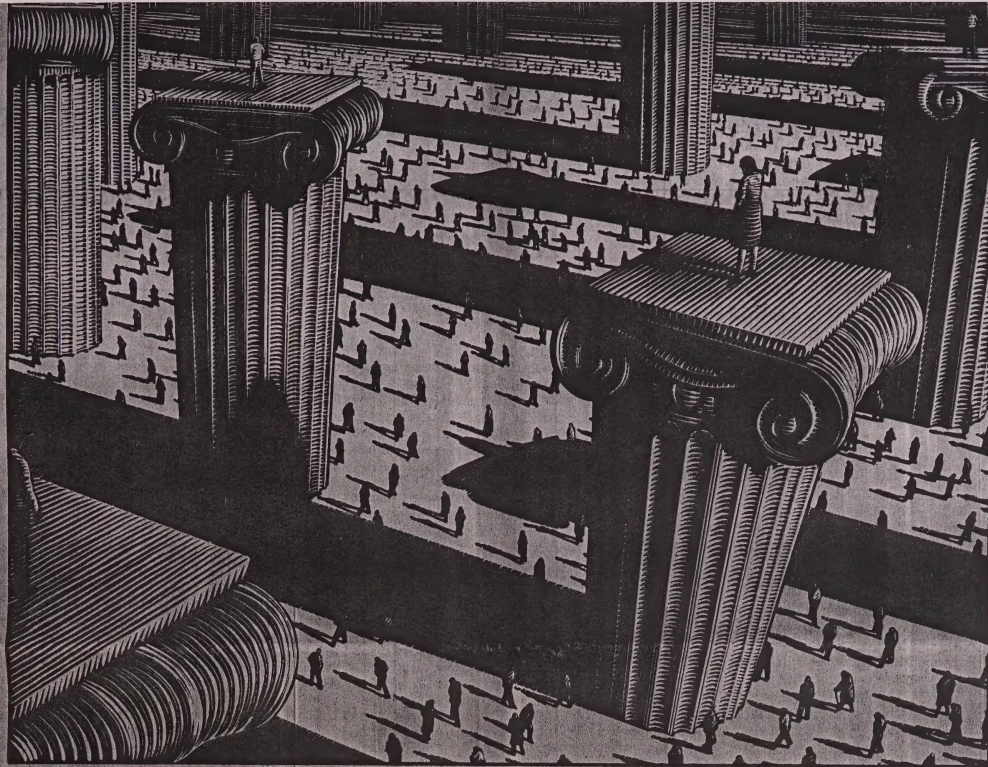
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Temple of politics

Perched in its tower of politics, the Religious Right is sending out not the message of grace but one of condemnation.

By James L. Evans

The story as told by H.G. Wells has the makings of a first-class fairy tale. A handsome Persian Prince falls in love and marries a beautiful Princess. Their love is idyllic. Nearly every person in their kingdom is caught up in the romance.

Unlike fairy tales, however, the story does not end happily ever after. The Princess dies suddenly of a strange disease. The Prince is left inconsolable. He lovingly places her remains in an elegant, yet simple, rose-colored granite tomb.

But it is not enough. The young Prince wants

James L. Evans is pastor of Montevello First Baptist Church. He wrote this for *The News*.

the world to know how much he loved his Princess. And so he begins to build a temple around the simple tomb. Exotic gardens are planted. Skilled stonemasons from around the world arrive to shape jagged stones into works of art. Gradually, a massive temple appears. It takes up more than 10 acres. The people in the kingdom stand in awe of their Prince's magnificent obsession.

The Prince is an old man when the temple is finished. One evening, as he stands on an elevated walkway within the temple, he gazes down into the magnificent garden. As he does, he notices a blemish. There is something there that does not quite fit. There is an unsightly discoloration in the midst of the perfection he has created.

He shouts to a worker below, "What is that? Remove that hideous thing!"

The hideous thing is the rose-colored granite tomb that holds the remains of his lovely Princess.

We wonder how it is possible for a man to hate what he once loved. Unfortunately, this sort of thing happens all the time. People pursue good ends with questionable means. Lofly and important visions are exchanged for meager accomplishments. It happens in love, in politics and even in religion.

The current political agenda of Evangelicals on the Religious Right is a case in point.

An Evangelical, by definition, is someone committed to the Gospel. The word means "good news" in Greek and is usually translated "gospel." Christians believe that the gospel, the good news, is God's offer of salvation, redemption and forgiveness through Jesus of Nazareth. This is the good news to which they are committed. And it is good news they have traditionally wanted to share with others. Being an Evangelical also means being an "evangelist."

But something has happened to the Evangelical vision. Announcing the good news has taken a tragic turn. The message that began as a word of grace and forgiveness has become a message of judgment and condemnation. Instead of telling a winsome story of God's love for us, the tale has turned ugly.

There is a simple explanation for this shift in perspective. Members of the Religious Right take seriously their self-appointed role as guardians of American morality. For them, America is God's new chosen land. It is their job to make it and keep it holy. But traditional methods are not working. Preaching, Sunday School, revivals, all the things they were taught to do in the past seem to fall on deaf ears. Evangelicals of the Religious Right fear that they and their message are being ignored.

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Who to trust these days?

By Suzanne Garment

The nation's newest independent counsel, former Solicitor General Kenneth W. Starr, is finally starting his investigation of Whitewater. There was a brief hitch: Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., asked the federal judges who named Starr to un-name him, on the grounds that the appointment process and Starr himself were too partisan. But the judges speedily answered they had no authority to do such a thing.

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How come we don't seem to have in our national life

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Virtually none of them, measured by modern standards could pass investigative muster. Recent historians have exposed their personal vices and their activities as agents of international capitalism. But in their day, their word was enough to settle even the most rancorous political arguments.

Then, after the turmoil of the 1960s, came Watergate — during which President Nixon fired Archibald Cox, a special prosecutor very much in the mold of the traditional public man. There was national uproar.

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INSIDE



Vital Issues

Labor Day is the traditional kickoff of the fall campaign season, so it's time for the gubernatorial candidates to get specific about the issues most vital to our state — education, tax reform, lifted expectations. (Editorial) Page 2C

Board of contributors

Political scientists Carl Grafton and

It's not
home,
it'll do

By Angela Charlton

Even the crowded train on my mood. After a riverbank looking for picking and late-night friend's summer cottage too relaxed to care. Moscow's 10 million to have piled on a train back to town.

I was also too memories of old cottages, thousands on the shores of the sea. The same lazy days sunbaths, mosquito gorging.

Then the spastic tr sacks of vegetables a me back to reality, that this was not exa Clanton. And emm while summer cotta undoubtedly enjoya world, the concept is defined.

The Russian word translated into English "house," can signify a one-room wooden sh equipped modern esta are generally gro Russia's largest cit need for weekend metropolitan burnout. The Moscow region, country's largest cit to the best and w planning, offers the of dacha lifestyles.

According to recen than half of Moscow access to a dacha. thousands of familie plots of land, based system of rank and no Russian I kno understanding. In s factory would purch grant small plots f workers. The work or developed the wished, or used it as better apartment in example.

The vast majority fall closer to the "sh spectrum. With n plumbing nor centr rarely more than tw were clearly design weekend visits and habitation.

The party bosses more upscale, spa Depending on their p

See H

Angela Charlton, in Moscow, wrote News.

Anne Permaloff say come from the right an Alabama. Page 2C

Southern Expos

Vicki Covington wonder people pick on grits, the comfort food, when the South? Page 3C

Readers opinion

Readers air their views letters to the editor. Page 4C

Books

There are lots of books authors due out this fall more in editor Joey Ken column. Page 6C



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Located anywhere from 30 to more than 100 miles outside the city center, the dachas are generally easily accessible by local trains. Given

Right

From Page 5C

Faced with the prospect of losing out to secular humanists (or liberal pagans as columnist Cal Thomas calls them), leaders of the Religious Right changed the message. What else could they do? If America will not choose the good news, then the good news must be imposed upon them. How do they go about accomplishing this? By means of politics, of course.

But how do they hope to gain a hearing in the political realm? If Americans are ignoring the good news of grace and forgiveness proclaimed from pulpits and Sunday School classes, why should they vote for the good news at the polls? Obviously some tactic is needed that will make the message so compelling Americans will not dare ignore it.

The tactic the Religious Right is using is the tried and true method of scapegoating.

This is how it works. First, identify what frightens people the most. Second, search around and find some tainted person or movement to blame for the fearful event. Third, trumpet loudly that these "enemies" are destroying our dreams and our way of life. Pepper the message with condemnation and judgment. After all, it's not just America that is threatened, but God's word too.

Finally, state clearly that the solution rests in electing "right-minded" candidates who will pass the "right laws" that will make America right again. The logic seems to work this way: "If we elect the right people, create the right political structures, pass and enforce the right laws, then people in America will automatically do what God wants them to do. After this, things will get better." No one

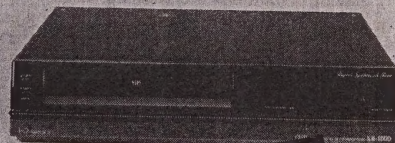
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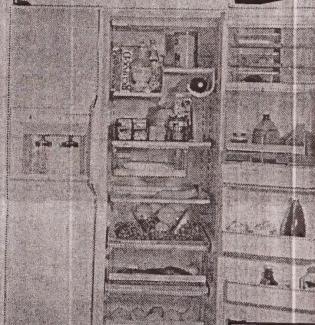
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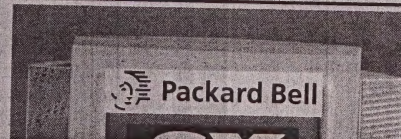
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It almost sounds too simple to work. But it does work. It is working. The climate in America is tailor-made for this tactic. The fear that the Religious Right needs to portray itself as champion of truth is thick in the air around us. As always, there are plenty of convincing scapegoats to carry the burden of blame for our national woes.

In the meantime, the preaching of good news that offers hope and forgiveness is nearly drowned out by shouts of condemnation and blame. In place of the good news is a systematic "sinner bashing" designed to create and enhance fear. With fear comes hate. And where there is hate there is good news for no one.

The original vision of the Religious Right's message was to make God's presence real in our midst. With that presence comes hope and meaning for life. The current agenda is clearly at cross purposes with that original hope. An unrelenting message of judgment and condemnation drives people away from God's presence and into the arms of despair.

It is a sad and tragic loss of vision. The original idea was a good one — it was good news. But now, only bitterness and rancor remain. Standing on the balcony of the great temple of political influence they have built, members of the Religious Right look down into the exotic garden of American life. That garden is filled, as it always has been, with the sinners in need of grace and forgiveness.

"What is that?" they shout. "Remove that hideous thing!"

With that as their resolute cry, Evangelicals celebrate the construction of a temple for the right-minded. Meanwhile, those of us who are sinners in one way or another, wonder why our evangelists have stopped bringing good news.

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REVIEW & COMMENT

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1994

Summer of Jordan leaves its mark on us

By Justin Fox

Michael Jordan was loitering in left field just 40 feet away, but the kids sitting next to me paid him no mind. They'd cornered a real live Japanese tourist, and they were asking him important questions.

"Do y'all have motorcycles?" one said. "Do y'all have 'em in Japan?"

He didn't understand. It was the contraction "y'all" that gave him problems, but the kids

Justin Fox is an editorial writer for *The News*.

didn't get that. So one tried a different approach: "It's like a bike. A bicycle with a motor." That left both sides stumped. Then one of the kids piped up: "Do you like Chinese food?"

OK, so Michael Jordan didn't command the full attention of everyone in Birmingham — or even everyone in the Hoover Met — during his stay here. But if it weren't for Jordan's presence, that Japanese tourist — a Tokyo economics student with a baseball fetish — wouldn't have been sitting in the stands at that Aug. 23 Barons game.

Nor would there have been a reporter from London's *Mail* on Sunday, a Japanese freelance and a guy from the *Chicago Tribune*

waiting in the locker room after the game. They all, of course, wanted to talk to Mr. Product Endorsement himself. (In England, the *Mail* on Sunday man told me, "No one knows what he does. He just sells sneakers.")

They were out of luck. Jordan was steamed at the *Post-Herald's* Barons beat writer, Rubin Grant, who had chided him in the morning paper for not visiting sick kids and generally failing to be a community-minded guy during his time here. He spent about five minutes chewing the reporter out. After Grant walked away, looking stunned, Barons media guy Chris Pika timidly approached Jordan. Before long he was back, telling the waiting media that His Airness didn't wish to talk.

So I stood behind Jordan in the locker room and stared as he, clad in a blue towel and a left-shoulder ice pack, silently sipped a Bud Light and watched TV. He looked like he might actually be a human being. But I'll choose to ignore that. He's much more interesting as an economic phenomenon.

Up in Chicago, the chamber of commerce estimated that Jordan was worth \$600 million to the area's economy during each of the three years that his Chicago Bulls won the NBA championship. This was a typically generous chamber of commerce calculation — if a Chicagoan bought a pizza to eat while

See Jordan, Page 4C



TOM LINDLEY

CAPITAL COMMENT

Going after the top prize

Gov. Jim Folsom's march to the November general election seems to be designed to follow a trail of ribbon cuttings across the state. Last week his official duties took him to Auburn for the announcement that Briggs & Stratton will locate a \$30 million plant there, employing 500 workers.

Not long ago there was the stop in Gadsden, where General Motors officials said they had decided Etowah County would be the site for a new 1,200-employee plant. And Folsom repeatedly has gone to Tuscaloosa for major announcements on the Mercedes-Benz project.

These are the kind of duties that politicians live for — they put them in the best possible political light.

It also illustrates the power of incumbency and the advantage an officeholder has over a challenger.

While wearing the robe of governor, Folsom can travel around the state, meet with local dignitaries and pick off valuable political points.

He also can count on having his picture on the front page of the local newspaper.

Given that, one can rest assured that Folsom will make every groundbreaking ceremony and industrial-recruitment press conference he can over the next two months.

Although nobody is whispering that further economic development announcements are in the offing, insiders say there is an "electricity" within the Alabama Development Office.

The idea of Folsom getting so much positive — and free — publicity would seem to cause a problem for former Gov. Fob James and his campaign staff. How does the Republican candidate counteract Folsom's reports of industrial recruitment without upsetting local leaders or appearing petty?

James press spokesman Donald J. Claxton said Folsom is using the power of the office as one would expect.

That doesn't mean the James gang is about to concede anything, however.

"I think what the race is going to focus on is what is going on in Montgomery and how is Jim Folsom running the state government," Claxton said. "We are going to focus more on honesty and integrity ... (and) who is at Folsom's side and all the money that's flowing around in that administration."

Claxton grants that any community would be glad to hear that jobs are coming there, and if Folsom gets to make that announcement, that's good for him.

But aside from that, it gets right to the heart of people when they know their tax dollars are coming to Montgomery and being wasted."

He said that "reality" will cut across the glossy facade of an industrial announcement and wipe away the benefit of ribbon-cutting photo opportunities.

Maybe, maybe not.

Take Tuscaloosa, for example.

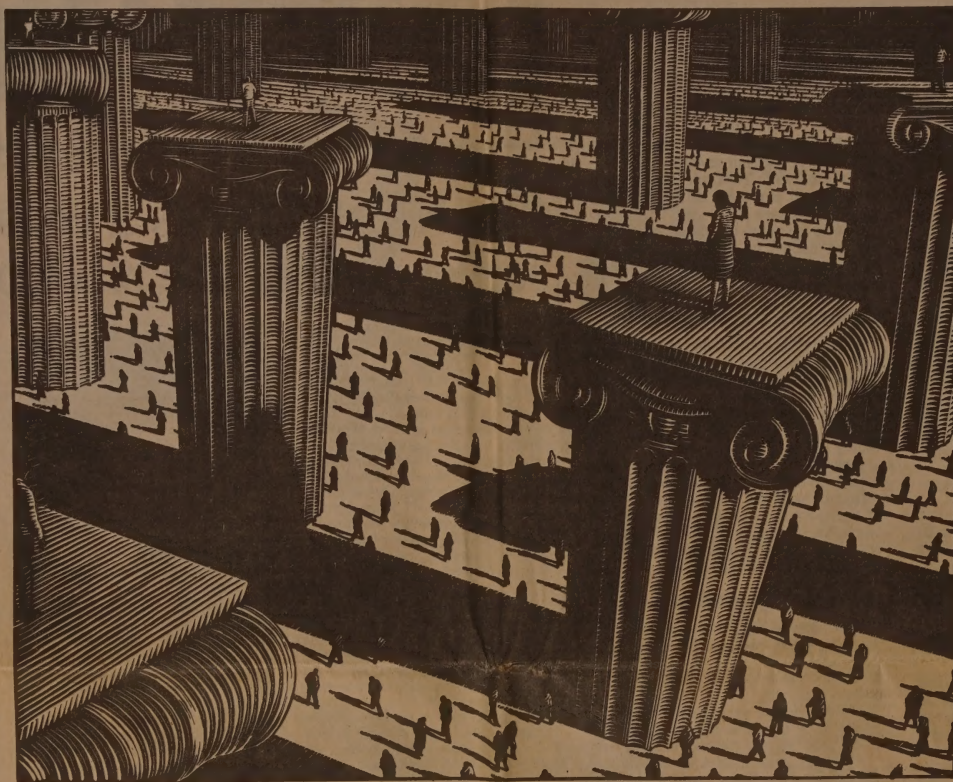
In the Democratic Party primary, Folsom defeated Paul Hubbert statewide by about 14 percent. But in Tuscaloosa, where many were still celebrating Mercedes' decision to locate in Alabama, Folsom won by a margin of nearly 2-to-1.

Folsom has said the tax-incentive package pushed by his administration shortly after he took office is the key to the rash of recent industrial announcements.

Claxton said James is studying the plan. "He's glad Mercedes is here and he's glad the jobs are coming to Alabama, but there are only so many times you can give away an incentive program that makes cuts in your tax base," he said. He said James wants to know what can be done to bring that revenue into the tax coffers instead of giving it away. Administration officials say they aren't giving anything away, because without the program the jobs wouldn't be created in the first place. The public gets to answer that public policy question Nov. 8.

The winner gets the blue ribbon.

Tom Lindley is Montgomery bureau chief for *The News*.



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It's not home, but it'll do

By Angela Charlton

Even the suffocatingly crowded train could not ruin my mood. After two days of riverbank lounging, berry picking and late-night talks at a friend's summer cottage, I was far too relaxed to care that half of Moscow's 10 million citizens seemed to have piled on one elektrichka train back to town.

I was also too immersed in memories of other summer cottages, thousands of miles away, on the shores of the Alabama River. The same lazy days, water antics, sunbaths, mosquitoes, watermelon gorging.

Then the spastic train ride and the sacks of vegetables at my feet jolted me back to reality, reminding me that this was not exactly the road to Clanton. And reminding me that, while summer cottage dwelling is undoubtedly enjoyable around the world, the concept is still culturally defined.

The Russian word "dacha," while translated into English as "summer house," can signify anything from a one-room wooden shack to a fully equipped modern estate. The dachas are generally grouped around Russia's largest cities, where the need for weekend respite from metropolitan burnout is most acute. The Moscow region, surrounding the country's largest city and testimony to the best and worst of Soviet planning, offers the richest variety of dacha lifestyles.

According to recent figures, more than half of Moscow's families have access to a dacha. Under Stalin, thousands of families were granted plots of land, based on an arcane system of rank and connections that no Russian I know admits to understanding. In some cases, a factory would purchase land, then grant small plots to each of its workers. The workers then built on or developed the plot as they wished, or used it as barter — for a better apartment in Moscow, for example.

The vast majority of these dachas fall closer to the "shack" end of the spectrum. With neither indoor plumbing nor central heating, and rarely more than two rooms, they were clearly designed for summer weekend visits and not long-term habitation.

The party bosses enjoyed the more upscale, spacious abodes. Depending on their proximity to the

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Angela Charlton, a writer living in Moscow, wrote this for *The News*.

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INSIDE



Vital issues

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Anne Pernaloff say reactionaries come from the right and the left in Alabama. Page 2C

Southern Exposure

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Readers opinions

Readers air their views in the Sunday letters to the editor. Page 4C

Books

There are lots of books from major authors due out this fall. Find out more in editor Joey Kennedy's Books column. Page 6C

Victor H. Hanson II/Publisher
James E. Jacobson/Editor
Ronald B. Casey/Editorial Page Editor

Rufus N. Rhodes/Publisher 1888-1910
Victor H. Hanson/Publisher 1910-1945
Clarence B. Hanson Jr./Publisher 1945-1983

EDITORIALS

CULLUM

Election primer

■ If you don't want to buy your candidates like hair spray, here are some questions to ponder

For decades Alabama has endured the same promises, excuses and shameless dodges from candidates who think getting elected is more important than getting something done after election day.

We'll have that kind of claptrap in 1994 if we leave it to the pros. We'll buy our candidates like hair spray — with 30-second ad wars to choose whether Product Democrat or Product Republican has the slickest finish.

Let's just say no.

Labor Day traditionally is the starting point for general election campaigns. If you only want to be a consumer of government, the hair-spray approach will suffice. If you want to be a citizen, here are some serious issues to keep in mind as the races unfold.

Education

Pick any indicator you want, and we grade poorly.

Our general population is the least educated in the country, mostly because so many of Alabama's struggling people had to give up trying to put a diploma on the wall to put food on the table.

Forty-six states give their elementary and high school children more money for an education than we do. Yet, on the other hand, we waste millions on a junior college system bloated by pork and politics into one of the most elaborate in the country.

Our schools have been declared unconstitutional in court. After Nov. 8 (election day) there'll be the damndest funding crisis you ever saw, as all the extra spending the state can't afford but the Legislature passed out to buy votes last session comes home to roost.

Specifically what do we do about this mess? And how do we pay for the changes Alabama desperately needs?

Taxes

Since 1918, one study after another has called for reform of Alabama's unfair, inflexible, inadequate, schizoid taxes.

Better than 90 percent of this state's money is tied up in earmarking schemes so it can be spent for only the purpose to which a specific tax is dedicated. There is no way to shift money to where the need is greatest.

The tax burden is a reverse Robin Hood; it falls heaviest on the middle class and poor. And still, there is so little revenue that no service in Alabama's General Fund (save highway building) is paid for anywhere above a minimal level unless under court order.

There are plenty of excellent plans for tax reform. We have one done just about every decade. Who will actually put one into effect and how?

Crime

The way this issue was handled in the primary election was a disgrace. A triple-slaying in Gadsden drew a gaggle of candidates with cameras, all vowing to lock 'em up and throw away the key.

But we already do that. The average stay in Alabama's prisons (not counting

life sentences) is 2.9 years. That's almost twice the national average. And still, the violent crime rate has increased 55 percent over the past five years.

When do we get smart on crime, instead of just tough? Seventy-five percent of the criminals entering the system have some degree of alcohol or drug addiction, yet we spend only a fifth of the Southeastern average on substance abuse programs. From 10,000 to 19,000 inmates currently in our jails are functionally illiterate.

Who's got some intelligent remedies to make sure those inmates don't come back to jail and to help make sure at-risk children don't turn to crime?

Race

We have no black public officials elected from a statewide ballot in Alabama. While we like to talk about the strides this state has made since the 1960s in race relations, our society often resembles two cultures striving for peaceful co-existence rather than to take full advantage of their diversity.

Too often, as in Wedowee, that balance is upset and our state officials whistle past the wreckage.

How do we get to be a state where people are judged by the content of their character rather than the color of their skin?

Economic development

We have to stop trying to determine how well economic development is progressing in this state only by counting the number of smokestacks we've gained against the number of smokestacks other Southern states gained. The quality of jobs counts, too, not just the quantity.

How do we mesh economic development with environmental development?

How do we build the economy in some of the most long-suffering areas of Alabama, like a string of Black Belt counties where the unemployment rate has been in double digits for 30 years?

Greater expectations

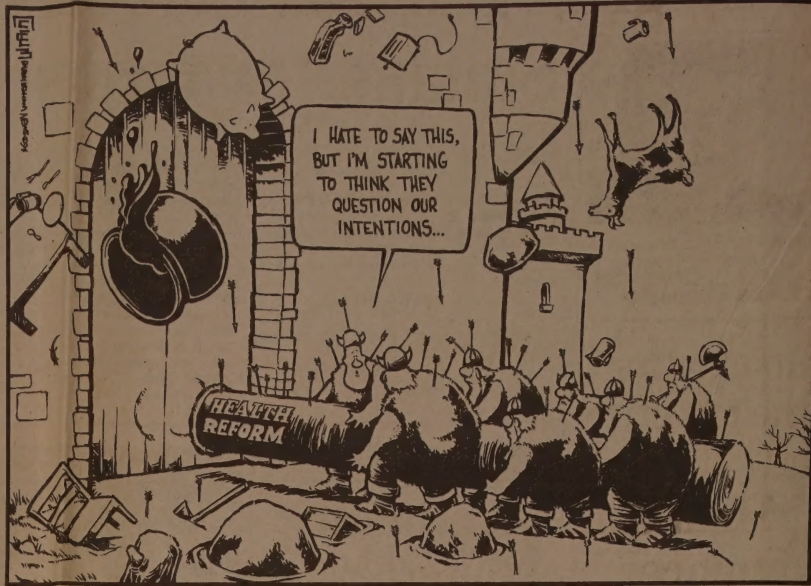
There are so many other issues. What do we do about the quarter of this state that doesn't have health insurance? About the fifth so poor it could qualify for food stamps tomorrow?

About a justice system that these days seems to be a rope in the tug of war between trial lawyers and business groups?

About the general lack of accountability for our tax dollars? About a disgraceful standard of ethics in our Legislature, and our toothless laws to try to legally force what a sense of common decency ought to compel.

Underneath everything else one problem dominates in Alabama: We've never had a lot and we don't expect much more. The poverty of our past has joined with the greedlock of the present to numb our ambitions.

Where's a governor who can raise our expectations without lowering our self-esteem; who can inspire us to believe the promise of Alabama isn't hollow, that it can and will be fulfilled?



The NAACP needs a conservative leader to take the place of Chavis

By Doug Ford

In *The News'* article titled "NAACP Board Fires Chavis" in the Sunday Aug. 21 edition, I read about the group's budget deficit of \$3 million and the taint that has alienated financial supporters and, according to some NAACP chapters, new members. Benjamin Hooks, Benjamin Chavis' predecessor, said, "I don't know how on God's green earth we got into this situation." Although a white outsider, I believe the answers to explaining their current problems are simple.

When the civil rights movement became less critical due to its major successes, the NAACP seemed to take on a new movement and unfortunately the movement was liberalism. The group became the representative for liberal black people, while in my opinion more black people are realizing that it is liberal policies such as the Great Society that have done more damage to their race (and mine) than anything the NAACP uses to blame their current problems on. Illegitimate births of blacks have skyrocketed, blacks are the chief target of violent crime, and most of us have heard the claim that there are more black men in prison than in college.

Conservatives do not suggest that blacks are to blame. Instead, we see these problems as results of failed liberal policies and the betrayal by the liberal lawmakers who have given them false promise of help. All one has to do is research the results of liberal legislation and examine the statistics. When whites mention what liberalism has done to blacks they are labeled as racist by liberals in the NAACP and when conservative blacks speak out against liberalism they are called "Uncle Toms" by the liberals in the NAACP.



MY TURN

Liberals pass laws that sometimes are well-intentioned, but if they would just use a little conservative sense they would see the programs aren't going to work. Take for instance the federally funded midnight basketball leagues that are part of the crime bill, designed to give inner city kids (majority black) something to do instead of being out on the street.

Conservatives know these kids should be at home in bed getting enough sleep to be prepared for school or work the next day. Liberals will tell you that the kids are going to be on the street no matter what, and that many of the kids don't have good parents or a good home to go to. We conservatives will remind you that the reason for the large number of broken homes is the result of yet another well-intentioned liberal federal program called Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which literally induces fathers of poor families to leave home by providing the mothers with monthly checks based on the number of their dependent children. This program also encourages young girls to get pregnant out of wedlock so that they can secure public housing and AFDC payments.

These programs are the problem, al-

though liberals want to blame it on the lack of "something to do." If it is the street thugs the liberals want off the street then they should look up the definition of "truth in sentencing" and we could take care of most of that problem.

Wouldn't it be nice to see the NAACP replace Chavis with a black conservative like Thomas Sowell, who would speak out for the new challenges the NAACP should be taking on. He would probably start his acceptance speech by saying something like, "We are no longer living in the 1960s. This is the 1990s and it is time to stop relying on the government and start looking to ourselves for self-improvement. We need not forget our past but we must not dwell on it. Instead, we should look forward."

The NAACP should look at what the future can hold and take this opportunity to start preaching independence instead of government dependence. It should join the conservative movement and emphasize free-enterprise, self-esteem, hard work, family values and personal responsibility. It should stay away from the likes of Louis Farrakhan, whose group has made anti-Semitic statements and has called whites "the enemy." It should stay clear of using "victim" status and asking the government to solve problems with liberal policies. It is time for the NAACP to stand up and better the black race by letting its youth know they have a chance in this great country and can be successful without government assistance.

Until the NAACP gets into the 1990s we will continue to see the money and membership problems that Mr. Hooks doesn't understand.

Doug Ford is a member of the Greater Birmingham Young Republicans and lives in Crestline.



In Alabama, reactionaries come from the right — and the left

It is a common misconception that opponents of progress reside exclusively on the political right. A related misconception holds that champions of progress reside exclusively on the left. One reason for the prevalence of these views is that conservatives have opposed improvements in ethics and campaign finance laws, education and infrastructure.

And, many conservatives have defended voting discrimination, segregation and regressive taxes.

From the turn of the century to 1961, Alabama state government was dominated by an alliance of the largest corporate interests and the wealthiest Black Belt plantation owners — the so-called Big Mules. The alliance's primary objective was to keep Alabama from changing politically, socially and economically.

When the alliance ruled, politics was simple. A clear line separated the Big Mules from outsiders (populists, progressives and liberals) whose policies more often than not would have improved the quality of life of the average Alabamian.

In the early 1960s the Big Mule alliance's rural and urban divisions split. Since then its components, especially agricultural interests and large corporations, have worked within shifting issue-specific coalitions to successfully block change. These enemies of progress were helped by George Wallace's reactionary pretense of a populist ideology.

Today Alfa, many retirees, the religious right and parts of the business community constitute the major inheritors of the Big Mule and Wallace traditions. Not everything they do diminishes general well-being (they favor tort reform, for example), but their overall thrust is to maintain an improvable status quo.

All this is well known. What is less widely appreciated is that for more than two decades the left has also been home to opponents of progress — those who might be termed liberal reactionaries. Unlike their colleagues on the right these reactionaries

project images of concern for the common person. These bogus liberals are, they insist, part of the New South.

In the past few years the trial lawyers, the Alabama Education Association, labor unions and black political groups have at varying times been part of this reactionary left. In differing alliances and with varying degrees of intensity, they opposed tort reform, meaningful improvements in schools, and improved ethics and campaign finance legislation. While all of these groups were not on the same side of every issue, the general thrust of their activities was to stifle improvement in the quality of life in Alabama.

The left and right are also home to advocates of improvement. For example, many conservative business leaders understand that the state cannot continue to depend on low-tech, low-wage industry. They realize that solid economic development depends on the kinds of businesses that need well-educated workers and that Alabama's public school systems, two-year colleges and universities are not even close to fulfilling their responsibilities in a modern economy. Representatives of this group supported A-plus and Gov. James Folsom Jr.'s education bills.

Similarly, many liberals understand that half-century-old incantations are not up to the task of improving a state that has for decades been listed close to last in nearly every quality of life comparison worth making.

In the 1994 Democratic and Republican party



Anne Pernaioff and Carl Grafton
BOARD OF CONTRIBUTORS

after the administratively casual Wallace, James produced few substantive improvements and abused the perquisites of office almost as flagrantly as did Guy Hunt. James wisely refrained from seeking a consecutive term.

It is one of many ironies of 1994 that James has assumed Wallace's mantle as an enemy of change. He is supported by the same groups who constituted Wallace's core. Should James win this time, he will doubtless prove considerably more effective in opposing change than he was the first time as an advocate of change.

Charles Graddick, the Republican nominee for lieutenant governor, served a routine term as attorney general (as a Democrat) and came close to winning the Democratic nomination for governor. Graddick enjoys roughly the same narrow base of support as James, and his "tough man for tough times" slogan summarizes his perspective on government better than could a skilled satirist.

On the Democratic side, liberal reactionaries scored a victory with the ever-ambitious Don Siegelman, another former attorney general, known

more for his style than his accomplishments. Closely associated with the trial lawyers, he will have no difficulty gaining the support of the other liberal reactionary organizations. Siegelman is now extending olive branches to the business community.

By nominating James, Graddick and Siegelman voters in both parties signaled a preference for the status quo. But politics is not tidy. The electorate also nominated Gov. James Folsom Jr. for governor.

In his abbreviated term as governor the Democratic nominee surprised many by siding with the forces of progress as his father did, although in a much different stylistic way. His removal of the Confederate battle flag from the Capitol dome, vigorous support of education reform and ethics and campaign finance legislation, passage of whistleblower protection for state employees and the Mercedes-Benz deal are not the actions of a reactionary.

Too many of his aides are nothing but drones (an unfortunate characteristic shared with Big Jim), and his abortive raid on state retirement systems was a shameful and stupid act, but perfection in politicians of any stripes is an impossibility.

In his long career Folsom's history as a reformer is short, but it has been more productive than his opponent's or either of the contenders for the office of lieutenant governor. Of the four leading candidates for the state's two highest offices, he alone follows in the progressive tradition of Alabama politics.

Carl Grafton and Anne Pernaioff are professors of political science at Auburn University at Montgomery. Their second book on Alabama politics, "Political Power in Alabama: The More Things Change . . .", will soon be published by the University of Georgia Press.

OTHER VOICES

Why grits and Goo Goo Clusters make us feel better

I hate South-bashing. I also hate the aftermath of it — the indignant letters to the editor, the counterpoint editorials.

Nevertheless, here I sit obsessed with what *Chicago Tribune* columnist Mike Royko said in last Sunday's News: "In some parts of the country, especially the South, many parents can't stop fretting and fussing because a teacher isn't telling their offspring to bow their heads and ask the good Lord for something or other. You would think these God-fearing folk would be content to have their children say a morning prayer in the kitchen before eating their grits."

God-fearing folk, eating their grits.

Yankee obsession

Why grits? Why is it Yankees can't get off grits? Royko, after all, was trying to write a column on school prayer. How on earth did he end up in a bowl of grits?

And what are grits anyway? I understand that they are a byproduct of dried corn kernels that've been finely ground. But why are they also the object of ridicule?

Why not Goo Goo Clusters — the South's favorite candy. As the slogan says, "Go get a Goo Goo ... It's candy." Why can't they go after Goo Goo when they

want to make fun of us? Or Moon Pies. I understand there's a Moon Pie Cultural Club in Charlotte, N.C., dedicated to spreading the story of the Moon Pie and establishing club chapters throughout the civilized world. What about chitlins? Perhaps chitlins are too visceral, so to speak, for brainy types like Mike Royko.

I have this hunch that people like Royko secretly want to eat grits — both figuratively and literally. I've never met a Northerner who didn't like grits. I always fix grits when New York editors visit us because they expect grits. They want to call home at mid-morning and tell their co-workers, "I just ate grits." It makes them feel like they've seen the world. I can't tell you many boxes of Jim Dandy or Martha White we've Fed-exed to Manhattan after the editors



Vicki Covington
SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

have left, after they've called to say, "Can you mail me some grits? My girlfriend's got to have some."

I tell them to be sure to use half milk, half water. I learned this from my sister-in-law, Haden, who is from Camden. She says she learned it from her mother, who learned it from the wife of a sand and gravel salesman in Tallahassee who fixed a meal of fried fish, turnip greens, and grits one night. The grits were wonderful, and Haden's mother was told, "It's because of milk."

So, the other day my mother and Haden and I were trying to figure out how to make my daddy feel better after a series of medical procedures, and Haden said, "Grits with milk!" Right before I left that day, I noticed a freezer-size Ziploc baggie of Goo Goo Clusters on the kitchen counter, sent to my daddy from his sister, Mary Nell. This was her idea of what'd make him better.

Southern women, after all, are gifted in the healing arts and the mainstay of Southern healing has been the use of food. Eggs, baking soda, sugar, whiskey, tea, syrup, herbs, plants, catnip and mustard poultices. Household staples — grits, Goo Goo.

Eddy Harris, author of *South of Haunted Dreams*:

A Ride Through Slavery's Old Back Yard, traveled the South on his blue BMW motorcycle, searching for rednecks and bigots. Instead he found emancipation from his own racism and bias about white Southerners.

He tells of a white waitress in Mississippi who suddenly bought him a salad because he looked tired to her. Through a series of encounters with tiny acts of kindness, he came to write not an essay of hatred, but a love song to the South.

Southern verses

"Tell us about the South. What's it like there. What do they do there. Why do they live there. Why do they live at all." William Faulkner asks that in *Absalom, Absalom!* There are no question marks, however, in those sentences. For those aren't questions. They are verses to a song. A love song — like the Goo Goo Clusters my aunt left on the kitchen counter, like grits with milk, like the way I'm already starting to feel better about Mike Royko, who probably wishes he could sing the song himself.

Vicki Covington is a Birmingham novelist. She writes this column weekly for *The News*.

When computer literacy replaces book literacy

By David Gelernter

Computers should be in the schools. They have the potential to accomplish great things. With the right software, they could help make science tangible or teach neglected topics like art and music. They could help students form a concrete idea of society by displaying on-screen a version of the city in which they live — a picture that tracks real life moment by moment.

In practice, however, computers make our worst educational nightmares come true. While we bemoan the decline of literacy, computers discount words in favor of pictures and pictures in favor of video. While we fret about the decreasing cogency of public debate, computers dismiss linear argument and promote fast, shallow romps across the information landscape. While we worry about basic skills, we allow into the classroom software that will do a pupil's arithmetic or correct his spelling.

More boring

Take multimedia. The idea of multimedia is to combine text, sound and pictures in a single package that you browse on screen. You don't just read Shakespeare; you watch actors performing, listen to songs, view Elizabethan buildings. What's wrong with that? By offering children a candy-coated presentation, multimedia is guaranteed to sour them on unsweetened reading. It makes the printed page look even more boring than it used to look. Multimedia only increases the odds against reading.

So what if the little nippers don't read? If they're watching *Oliver* instead, what do they lose? The text, the written word along with all of its attending pleasures. Besides, a book is more portable than a computer, has a higher-resolution display, can be written on and dog-eared and is comparatively dirt cheap.

Hypermedia, multimedia's comrade in the struggle for a brave new classroom, is just as troubling. It's a way of presenting documents on screen without imposing a linear start-to-finish order. Disembodied paragraphs are linked by theme; after reading one about the First World War, for example, you might be able to choose another about the technology of battleships, or the life of Woodrow Wilson, or hemlines in the '20s. This is another cute idea that is good in minor ways and terrible in major ones. Teaching children to understand the orderly unfolding of a plot or a logical argument is a crucial part of education. Authors don't merely agglomerate paragraphs; they work hard to make the narrative read a certain way, to prove a particular point. To turn a book or a document into hypertext is to invite readers to ignore exactly what counts — the story.

The real problem, again, is the accentuation of already bad habits. Dynamiting documents into disjointed paragraphs is one more expression of the sorry fact that sustained argument is fading rapidly.

Another software species, "allow me" programs, is not much better. These programs correct spelling and, by applying canned grammatical and stylistic rules, fix prose. In terms of promoting basic skills, though, they have all the virtues of a pocket calculator.

Prose-correcting programs are also a little ghoulish, like asking a computer for tips on improving your personality. On the other hand, I ran this essay through a spell-checker, so how can I ban the use of such programs in schools? Because to misspell is human; to have no idea of correct spelling is to be semiliterate. There's no denying that computers have the potential to perform inspiring feats in the classroom. If we are ever to see that potential realized, however, we ought to agree on three conditions. First, there should be a completely new crop of children's software. Most of today's offerings show no imagination. There are hundreds of similar reading and geography and arithmetic programs, but almost nothing on electricity or physics or architecture. Also, they abuse the technical capacities of new media to glitz up old forms instead of creating new ones. Why not build a time-travel program that gives kids a feel for how history is structured by zooming you backward? A spectrum program that lets users twirl a frequency knob to see what happens?

Second, computers should be used only during recess or relaxation periods. Treat them as fillips, not as surrogate teachers. When I was in



school in the '60s, we all loved educational

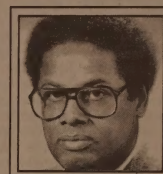
films. When we saw a movie in class, everybody won: teachers didn't have to teach, and pupils didn't have to learn. I suspect that classroom computers are popular today for the same reasons.

Face to face

Most important, educators should learn what parents and most teachers already know: you cannot teach a child anything unless you look him in the face. We should not forget what computers are. Like books — better in some ways, worse in others — they are devices that help children mobilize their own resources and learn for themselves. The computer's potential to do good is modestly greater than a book's in some areas. Its potential to do harm is vastly greater — across the board.

David Gelernter is a professor of computer science at Yale. This article first appeared in *The New Republic*.

No good can come of this O.J. case



Thomas Sowell
IN PERSPECTIVE

Even larger than the personal tragedies involved in the O.J. Simpson case is a deeper national tragedy. The circus-like atmosphere surrounding what is, after all, a murder trial is a sad commentary on the media and on those media addicts who thrive on scandal.

The disgraceful leaks of evidence, including bogus evidence, by the prosecution or the police has set off an orgy of media appearances by attorneys for both sides, trying the case on TV instead of in the courtroom. These calculated attempts to bias potential jurors poison the legal process. Can anyone find 12 hermits who have never heard anything about this case?

Early reports of a bloody ski mask, which the prosecution itself later said did not exist, now cast a cloud over other evidence that does exist. Who was so hot for a conviction that they put out a false story? And what else might they have done?

The defense has not covered itself with glory either. Extravagant demands, pettifoggery and playing the race card further poison the atmosphere.

Black "leaders" who met with the prosecutors to make various demands, including no death penalty in case of guilt, have added to the disgrace — as did the prosecution, by agreeing to meet with them. Whatever was said in these meetings may have no effect whatever on the trial itself but it can nevertheless add to the suspicions surrounding it and to the cynicism if the verdict is "not guilty."

The issue of race and racism will make this case a polarizing event, no matter what the verdict or the sentence. It is almost impossible to think of a scenario that will not leave the country as a whole worse off than before.

Perhaps if someone else is proved to have committed these murders — proved to the satisfaction of the court — as well as to the public — and O.J. Simpson goes free, saying that he holds no hard feelings toward the police or the prosecution, who were just doing their jobs, then and only then can there be a good outcome.

Unfortunately, that seems the least likely of all outcomes, however much some of us might wish for it.

What if the evidence convinces

the jury, but not the black community, that Simpson is guilty? What if the evidence convinces the jury, but not the white community, that Simpson must be acquitted? What if the jury cannot reach a verdict — and splits along racial lines?

Given the large racial difference in opinions as to whether Simpson is considered guilty or innocent, what outcome can possibly satisfy everyone — or just avoid leaving a bitter aftertaste for millions of Americans? Whichever side wins in the court room, the case is likely to end as a victory for tribalism, whether black or white, or both.

No one really knows at this point whether O.J. Simpson is guilty or innocent. That is why we have trials. But the media, the lawyers on both sides and the hustlers seem determined to make sure that it will not be a fair trial.

What if it turns out to be a fair trial anyway — and the verdict just? Will it be seen that way or will there be a whole industry of conspiracy theories and virulent rumors that go on for decades, as in the aftermath of the assassination of John F. Kennedy?

Will jurors who voted the "wrong" way — whatever way that turns out to be — find themselves targeted by the media and their home addresses published in retaliation, as happened with the Simi Valley jury in the Rodney King beating case?

If the normal standards of decent behavior no longer respect the integrity of the jury and the legal system, then perhaps we need some basic rethinking about courts and trials.

Maybe we need legal restrictions on what lawyers for either side can talk about in the media before a trial begins. Maybe we need trained professional jurors, chosen by lot for each trial rather than by lawyers' shenanigans. We certainly ought to keep their addresses confidential and they in turn ought to be under orders to keep their mouths shut about the trial — before, during and after.

Trials, after all, are meant to determine things much more serious than TV ratings or the visibility of lawyers and politicians.

Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, Calif.

Horrors! Washington's Mall is starting to look like, well, a mall

By Steve Twomey

Well, what's next?

A strip mall at Old Faithful? A Jiffy Lube on the battlefield at Gettysburg? Perhaps headstone-mounted TVs at Arlington National Cemetery? They seem logical extensions of the culture, now that Washington's Mall has been schooled this summer.

T-shirt vendors

At the base of the Washington Monument one day last week, vendors at half a dozen tables served up piles of T-shirts. Most of the tables were shaded by canopies flapping in a stiff breeze that, unfortunately, wasn't stiff enough to blow the whole mess to Ocean City, Md., where nobody would notice it.

Actually, nobody noticed all that much, even at the Monument. Among a dozen out-of-towners asked for their general impressions of the site and its vistas, not one

brought up the bazaar. Evidently, souvenir pollution is so bad everywhere that it becomes literally unremarkable when the spreading crude begins to lap at the feet of national treasures.

It wasn't so bad, in truth. The Monument was hardly ringed with commercialism. There were still plenty of angles from which to take a scrapbook photo that would include only the magnificent obelisk and its 50 flags, not the tables with the T-shirts of the Clintons or Bill and Hillary as Beavis and Butt-head.

Avoidance wasn't as possible at the National Air & Space Museum. The Mall immediately opposite Air & Space offered more T-shirts than Fruit of the Loom. A tourist had to run a gauntlet of garbage, except that many didn't run, they bought.

What began as a cluster of vendors at Air & Space has sprouted into lines of them up and down the pathways, said a National Park Service employee who was cleaning up the area and who declined to provide his

name. "People come from Montana and what they see is naked capitalism," he said.

At this rate, the Mall will become a mall.

It started this summer when vendors realized they could sell wares on the Mall if they first got a "demonstration" permit. Good for 21 days, the permits traditionally had gone to people marketing items in connection with a specific protest or rally. So, a lot of vendors suddenly became major political supporters of District of Columbia statehood. It's right there on the T-shirts, if you look carefully and spot the small print dwarfed by the main message of the T-shirt, the message that attracted the purchaser in the first place, because it sure wasn't statehood.

And the permits are easily renewable. So on a typical weekday, 50 to 100 vendors now work the Mall. It rises to 150 to 200 on Saturday and Sunday, according to Bruce Stocking, the park ranger who keeps track

of them.

Vendors are people too, of course. They have First Amendment rights. And I'm rather partial to the First Amendment. And the Mall is our great, green First Amendment place, the national venting room, which would be an ironic spot to stomp on free speech.

So we have to be careful here. The balance is dicey.

But mainly, the vendors wish to make money, not advocate. Two of them said Wednesday that the only reason they were on the Mall is because their competitors were on the Mall and a guy's got to earn the rent money. If there's an unrestricted right to sell on the Mall, then why not Yellowstone, Gettysburg, Arlington?

There have to be some places where a tourist can worship in peace. No one wants to walk around the base of the Washington Monument and see the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial and some guy cashing in. Selling T-shirts might be legal, even constitutional,

but it's darn demoralizing.

The National Park Service is trying to plug the loophole and restrict vendors. Lawsuits probably will follow. But surely something can be done to limit the number of vendors, control the appearance of their stands and perhaps create designated selling areas without infringing on anyone's rights.

For people

"Really, I hate anyone being on the Mall," said a man who asked not to be identified. "It's really very ugly. The Mall is supposed to be for people."

Sure, a vendor has to earn a living, he said, but this is "a bad thing." Spreading his arms wide over the T-shirts he was selling, he said, "You see it, what do you think?"

Steve Twomey is a local columnist for *The Washington Post*.

READERS' OPINIONS

Blinded in Wedowee to human spirit

Every Wedowee, large or small, is a piece of an ugly, mad mosaic formed over centuries in the South that, when discovered by some astute computer archaeologist detective hundreds of years from now, will reveal, for the first time, for all to see, the insanity of a region, filled with bullies and cowards, controlled and manipulated by strange and evil forces, the greatest of which was a blindness to the beauty and potential of the human spirit, regardless of the color of its skin covering.

John Wright Jr., Hoover.

No coverage for all an outrage, crime

It is an outrage and a crime against our citizens that we do not have universal health care for all in our country, that 38 million to 40 million people are without any type of medical coverage.

Why is it that countries in Europe, Canada and even dirt-poor communist countries have universal health care and here in the supposedly richest nation in the world we do not?

Is it that after 12 years of Reagan-Bush failed economic policies we simply cannot afford health care for our people? During the past decade real wages of the average American worker have dropped 20 percent as millions of decent-paying jobs disappeared, replaced by new part-time, low-wage jobs without health insurance.

Today our country ranks 12th worldwide in wages, health care, vacation time, parental leave and education opportunities. Our economic and social life is more and more resembling that of desperate Third World countries.

The answer why we don't have universal health care when poor nations manage to have it is that we live in a society of selfish, uncaring individuals. Judging from the letters to the editor I read, the people against universal health coverage must have adequate medical insurance.

I think we have to look no further than the U.S. Senate to find what is wrong. Members of Congress have the best medical care available at little or no cost. Sen. Richard Shelby, the No. 1 beneficiary of medical and insurance associations' PAC money in Congress, said he cannot support President Clinton's health plan.

A few weeks ago a group of citizens managed an interview with Sen. Robert Dole to express their health and medical insurance concerns. One of them was so bold as to suggest they would like the same health coverage members of Congress have. Dole's reply was that they could never expect to receive the health benefits he enjoys.

Case closed on why our country does not have health care for every citizen.

Jesse Bailey, Southside.

How do you make a Castro cocktail?

Castro cocktail:

Five parts vodka to one part Cuban rum. Mix in a red China bowl and top off with a nut.

R. Paul Moon, Meadow Brook.

Proposed 'deadbeat' laws full of problems

When an editor sanctions or states an opinion which could be misleading, there should also be another point of view. I refer to a statement in the editorial, "License to pay" regarding the DHR child support director's promotion of legislation that would "increase (child support) collections big time," by suspending licenses (even hunting and fishing).

How could suspending a license to work benefit any child? Could such an action be legal, since it interferes with contractual relationships? It sounds like a misuse of the legal process. Would the case go before a court of law? My guess is, it would be a kangaroo court set up for just this purpose. There is no justice in such courts, because loopholes are built into the system to enforce compliance.

Suggesting that the public will have to pick up the tab unless we pass the "deadbeat" law is a bureaucratic ploy or smoke screen to solicit support for the program.

Another disadvantage of the deadbeat law is, there is no such thing as a one-law-fits-all situation

Clinton shouldn't be in church pulpit

Church: a building for Christian worship, regular religious services. Sanctuary: a holy or sacred place, especially a building such as a church, mosque or temple. The most sacred part of a sacred structure, especially the part of a church where the principal altar is.

It is to be used to preach the gospel, to win souls, to be saved. For the president to use the pulpit in a church on the Sabbath for political purposes is a disgrace. He shouldn't ask people to pray for him. He should ask them to pray for our country. It appears Full Gospel AME Zion Church in Temple Hills, Md., has lost its calling. The Ten Commandments came long before the Constitution. Does the president not know Congress is supposed to represent the people and not him?

Mrs. Robert E. Bryant Sr., Huffman.

If embargo lifted, 'Yanki go home'

If we reflect back to the 1960s, the embargo against Cuba was established after Castro confiscated American properties worth billions of dollars. Castro told the Cuban people that the reason for all Cuba's problems was its relationship with the United States. And as I remember in the streets of Havana the signs read "Yanki Imperialist Go Home."

These confiscated properties have been sitting idle or managed by the communist regime. Now that Russian support has ended (\$100 billion since 1963) the embargo is working. Castro utilized that money to export guerrillas to Africa, Central and South America. He did not use it to build factories, hotels, etc. Now he wants U.S. taxpayers to subsidize his inadequate and fraudulent system without making reforms. The Castro machine and some U.S. politicians want to lift the embargo. "Yanki Imperialist Come Home."

It is not to buy medicine and food. It is to gain access to U.S. credits. This Mariel II is Castro's attempt to manipulate the American political system once more to the unilateral lifting of the embargo.

They want us to buy back what belonged to the United States and use that money to repress the people in Cuba. Maybe in a few years we will see in the streets of Havana "Yanki Go Home Again."

Jorge E. Alonso, Hoover.

'News' worth \$1.25 on Sundays, but . . .

Congratulations to The News for the "new and improved" Sunday editions the past few weeks. It's well worth the \$1.25 cost.

Vicki Covington, whose beautifully crafted writings are reminiscent of the late Taylor Caldwell, is a real treasure. A number of friends clip and save her column.

Thanks to Pamela McKee, the Alabaster teacher who wrote the "My Turn" Aug. 28, on the caring and human side of Hulond Humphries, a man greatly maligned by the media who is revered and loved by those, both black and white, who grew up under his influence.

On the flip side, I regret that The News, in an editorial about the murder of Donald Deason, neglected to give credit to Dee and Russ Fine, of WERC's "Fineline," whose unrelenting efforts resulted in the jail investigation. They and WERC are solely responsible for bringing black and white citizens together, preventing a cover-up of this travesty.

Jimmy C. Jones, Center Point.

Explain investment to relatives of dead

Foreign investment flowing into Cuba? Spanish companies buying hotels in Varadero? American companies missing out? Sound familiar?

It should because many of us have been reading these headlines for the past few months. Believe them if you believe in Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy. As an investor you should ask yourself: Is the national currency freely exchanged? How good is the banking system? Can one get clean title to property? Can the legal system protect the investor against government abuses? Cuba does not even begin to meet the minimum requirements to attract foreign investments.

Why, then, do some invest? Even under the worst conditions, there are some who will try to make money. You can find individuals willing to engage in drug trafficking. You might ask yourself if building hotels in Cuba is not like dealing in drugs. It is, of course, a matter of perspective. Try to explain the difference to thousands who have gone to jail because they wanted to be free. Or explain it to the relatives of those who died crossing the Florida Straits in inner tubes.

Dr. Mario Martinez, Vestavia.



Soviet collapse is complete

By Trudy Rubin

Much fanfare accompanied the withdrawal of the last Russian troops from Germany on Wednesday.

But less international notice was paid to the final exit of Russian soldiers from two Baltic republics, tiny Estonia and neighboring Latvia. A full Russian departure from the Baltics (they left Lithuania last year) was foreseen by few five years ago. Even a couple of years ago it seemed unlikely.

That it happened is substantially due to Western pressure on Moscow. But much credit is also due to Russian leader Boris Yeltsin, who withstood powerful nationalist pressures at home to keep a strong Russian military presence on the Baltic Sea. And this is one area of foreign policy where the Clintonites did things right.

By pulling out his troops, Yeltsin effectively capped the astonishing, and peaceful, collapse — in only five years — of an empire that Peter the Great started expanding westward three centuries ago.

The Baltic pullout was no easy maneuver for the Russian leader. Jobs and housing for the more than 100,000 returning troops were scarce. Powerful right-wing nationalist demagogues such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy have campaigned on a pledge to reoccupy the Baltics, which the Soviets annexed by force in 1940. Many ordinary Russians feel humiliated by the swift Russian retreat.

Russians also worry about the fate of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Russians who still live there. Many were sent to the Baltics during Soviet rule to help shift the population balance away from locals and toward ethnic Russians. Despite their colonial origins, they are now settled in the Baltics with children who were born there and don't want to leave.

So the peaceful Russian troop exit was more than a simple byproduct of the Cold War's end.

To recall how far the Baltics have come, and how fast, I need only look at my office wall. Hanging among my collection of old press passes, I have a faded cardboard identity tag for the first group meeting of the Baltic states in Tallinn, Estonia, in 1989. Still under Soviet rule, the delegates had to speak to each other in Russian because they had no other common language.

Estonian flags and displays about the horrors of forced Soviet deportations of Baltics to Siberia in the 1940s were on exhibit. They would have been jailing offenses only a year or two before.

In March 1990, Lithuania jumped the gun on the other 14 Soviet republics by declaring independence. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev imposed an economic embargo on Lithuania, and in January 1991, sent tanks into the Lithuanian capital to seize the republic's television

Jordan

From Page 1C

watching a Bulls' playoff game on TV, Jordan was credited with "inducing" the demand for that pizza. But it does give some indication of the man's clout.

In Birmingham, no one has tried to measure the overall economic impact of our Summer of Jordan. But there are lots of obvious little windfalls. Barons ticket sales went from 4,136 a game last year to 6,983 this year, and the team owners at Japanese beverage giant Suntory Ltd. are hoping the Jordan connection will make Barons souvenirs as sought-after as Durham Bulls junk has been ever since the movie *Bull Durham* came out. All those reporters and other Jordan watchers filled up hotel rooms and spent money at restaurants. Barons' "Team Realtor" Mary Milton says her business is way up since she helped Jordan find a house for the summer. And Barons' radio announcer Curt Bloom is still hoping that the exposure Jordan brought him will push him one step closer to a big league job.

But for Birmingham, plagued by what may be the nation's worst civic insecurity complex, Jordan's presence was valuable far more as an

image savior than for its direct commercial benefits.

Once upon a time, the people who ran Birmingham didn't care much about what the world thought of them. The world, after all, would still need our steel no matter what it thought of us. But now steel is just one industry among many. To prosper, Birmingham and Alabama have to appeal to educated workers and sophisticated employers. That's why the Alabama Economic Development Partnership, a group of big Alabama businesses, has been paying for all those national ads with slogans like, "Alabama. It isn't where you think it is." Michael Jordan provided a cheaper and less cryptic PR boost.

National newspapers and TV networks came to town to do nice stories that made no reference to Bull Connor's fire hoses and German shepherds. The *Atlanta Constitution* ran a big feature on what to see and do in Birmingham. Hanes, Gatorade and Ballpark Franks filmed commercials here. This didn't use to happen.

It was sort of fitting, therefore, that Jordan lived and worked not in history-burdened Birmingham but in Hoover, a city that is the sprawling, antiseptic clone of suburbs all over the country. His neighbors at Grey-

studio, killing a score of civilians.

Russian democratic forces in Moscow saw this attack as the signal that Gorbachev was ready to defend the holding of the Soviet empire by force.

And yet, Gorbachev never mounted a full-scale military operation against the restless Baltics. Probably he was restrained by the U.S. policy of "Baltic exceptionalism" — Washington never recognized the Soviet annexation of the three small states in 1940 and made it clear that their mistreatment would be viewed with special alarm.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in late 1991, Moscow formally recognized Baltic independence. But that independence was clouded by the continued presence of Russian troops until this year in Latvia and Estonia. As recently as July, it wasn't clear when, or if, Russia would bring the last of them home.

At the Naples economic summit, Yeltsin said "nyet" when asked at a press conference with President Clinton if all would leave by Aug. 31, as previously agreed on.

Yet, last week, — except for a mutually agreed-on number of several hundred Russian specialists — they all marched out.

They left naval bases that Russia, which is largely landlocked along its Western border, had once said were essential to national security. Among them was Paldiski, Estonia, captured by Peter the Great from the Swedes in 1710. Thousands of sailors have departed, leaving behind only 210 technicians remaining to decommission two nuclear reactors at the base.

And the other 600 who remain to operate an early-warning radar station at Skrunda, Latvia, will leave in 5 1/2 years, according to a bilateral deal.

They left, in large part, because the Clinton administration used an effective combination of carrots and sticks with Moscow.

In July, Clinton became the first American president to visit the newly independent Baltic states, meeting with the presidents of all three in Latvia's capital. He repeatedly raised the matter of the remaining several thousand Russian troops in meetings with and letters to Yeltsin.

And as a sweetener to Moscow, the United States provided 2,500 vouchers worth \$25,000 each to provide housing for some of the last soldiers leaving Estonia and Latvia.

The Baltics finally achieved real independence last week; in Estonia, the Clinton-Yeltsin partnership proved worthwhile.

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Trust

From Page 1C

Nixon had to name another special prosecutor to continue the investigation.

You might see this as heartwarming proof of the power of the trust-worthy individual in public life. But people enraged by Watergate found it intolerable that Nixon held the power to fire Cox in the first place, even if this theoretical power proved an empty one.

Yet they did not make their argument in this highly personal, anti-Nixon tone. Instead they said that all investigations of high government officials were tainted if conducted by special prosecutors who had been appointed by presidents and could be removed by presidents.

Thus arose the post-Watergate special prosecutor legislation, a real piece of work, designed to produce special prosecutors untouched by human hands. This law detailed the circumstances under which an attorney general had to seek the naming of such an official; actual appointment and removal were in the hands of the federal courts. Moreover, a special prosecutor could be fired only for "good cause" — an administrative law phrase meaning, roughly, "not unless you actually catch him on a boat to China with the family jewels."

Over the years, "special prosecutor" was changed to the more polite "independent counsel." People fought over just how much power an attorney general should have in the process, and they grumbled at the length and expense of independent counsel investigations.

But the institution stuck. Opponents succeeded in scrapping the

law only to be forced to re-institute it. The idea had become ingrained, not just for investigations but for government in general — only individuals thoroughly insulated from politics can be trusted with power.

Then the Clinton administration started trying to extricate itself from Whitewater. It laid in a supply of traditional public men whose reputations could help restore public trust. The president named Lloyd N. Cutler as White House counsel. With the independent counsel law temporarily expired, Attorney General Janet Reno appointed another such man, Robert Fiske, as Whitewater special prosecutor.

But despite their illustrious careers, neither bought the administration much in the way of increased respectability, and both saw their own reputations dimmed.

When Cutler insisted, during congressional testimony, that he was giving his independent legal judgment on Whitewater, that he was not talking as a partisan of the president and that because of his past career he should be believed, reactions ranged from cynical to more cynical.

Fiske followed the experts' advice, developed out of the Iran-Contra fiasco, by demanding that Congress delay public hearings on Whitewater so as not to compromise any criminal proceedings that might arise from his investigations. In his first two investigative verdicts, he concluded that White House aide Vincent Foster Jr. had indeed committed suicide, contrary to sinister rumor, and that no one had done anything criminal during the Resolution Trust Corp.'s inquiry into a Clinton-connected bank.

For these findings Fiske was ac-

stone, virtually all of them white, said they were happy to have him around. Ms. Milton says that when Jordan first came to town she got about 50 calls from people who offered to move out of their houses for the summer and let Jordan move in. It was as if Birmingham's years of racial pain — and even the brouhaha of four years ago over Shoal Creek's lack of black members — simply never happened.

That of course is chiefly an illusion, brought on by the blinding fame of a black athlete who transcends both sports and race. But Jordan's presence did have at least one tangible effect on local race relations. For the first time since the Barons abandoned urban Rickwood Field for the bucolic pleasures of the Hoover Met, large numbers of black fans attended the games.

So even if he doesn't visit sick kids or talk to all the reporters who want to talk to him, Jordan is nice to have around. And it looks like there's a good chance he'll be back with the Barons next year. Now if only his basketball pal and endorsement rival Charles Barkley makes good on his pledge to come home and run for governor in 1998. After that, who knows where people will think Alabama is?

cused of covering up on behalf of the Clintonites. What could you expect, went the critics' argument, of a man who owed his job to Reno?

When the independent counsel law was revived, the administration tried to regularize Fiske's status by having the courts name him an official, authentic independent counsel. But the judges, rigorously following post-Watergate logic, gave the job to someone who had never been appointed by the Clinton administration — someone, in other words, who was more formally independent than Fiske.

They chose Starr — the soul of prudence and a man whom even ideological opponents consider fair. But none of these qualities was enough to still suspicion; not even a court appointment, we discover, can bestow purity today. Starr is conservative, his pro-Clinton critics say. In the Paula Jones case, he talked about filing a friend-of-court brief to make the constitutional argument that a president is not immune from being sued. Starr, still relatively young, has even considered running for the Senate — as a Republican.

Worse, one of the judges who named Starr has Political Connections: In fact, he was seen lurching with a conservative senator. So how can Starr be fair minded?

We had better watch it. Too many scandals, producing results that many consider ludicrous, are making us cynical and embroiling us in the paradoxes that cynicism brings. Thus bad people in politics can no longer be truly ruined by scandal, while good people can no longer preserve their reputation for virtue.

When the political community so loses the ability to discriminate, we will find out what it really means to be governed by people we can not trust.

Mail letters to Readers' Opinions, P.O. Box 2553, Birmingham, Ala., 35202 or FAX them to 325-3345.

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of its readers. Letters published express the opinion of the writer, not necessarily The News. Letters should be brief and typed, if possible.

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er's name, address and daytime telephone number. The address and telephone number won't be published. Letters may be edited, but we try to make sure the tone and approach are not altered.

Home

From Page 1C

city and the Kremlin, some of these dachas were, and are, used as full-time homes. Such free-standing houses became especially prestigious as aggressive socialist housing development left Moscow itself virtually bare of single-family homes.

Today's nouveau riche, including more than a few members of the infamous Russian mafia, are now constructing their own dachas. Architecturally, these palaces imitate everything from 18th-century tsarist estates to Alpine villas or Hollywood mansions.

But for me, the "worker dachas" hold the most charm. In true Soviet form, these dachas were primarily built in close clusters, with relatively little space granted to each dacha owner, but acres of open space surrounding each cluster. Each "dachnik" thus has equal access to all the nearby resources — rivers for fishing, swimming, boating; woods for mushroom gathering; meadows for frolicking.

Each settlement also includes enough room for a small garden, explaining the huge sacks of cabbages, carrots and tomatoes I had to avoid crushing on the train back to Moscow.

Located anywhere from 30 to more than 100 miles outside the city center, the dachas are generally easily accessible by local trains. Given

Russians' loyalty to public transport, these trains are consistently crowded, especially on summer weekends.

Not everyone braves the train, however. Though I would have never guessed it from the heavy volume of traffic on the city's metros, I recently discovered that several Muscovites actually own cars, which they use primarily for summer dacha travel. And observing the gridlock on the highways from the train car, I decided the few million city residents not on my train had taken to the roads and were suffering a different kind of claustrophobia.

These dacha communities also provide an alternative to city socializing, which mostly includes formal dinners at friends' apartments. At my friend Andrei's dacha, the neighbors begin gathering around 5 p.m., sharing the fruits of their all-day barbecues, in addition to the barrels

full of home-brew vodka. The folk songs start by 8 p.m., and the twilight walks along the creeks continue until well past midnight.

Andrei's 4-year-old son Igor, lacking the network of cousins and siblings I enjoyed in childhood cottage visits, had no trouble finding playmates of all ages among other families in the area. As do many Muscovite children, Igor spends a full two months every summer at the dacha, with his grandmother Raisa.

Raisa, like most "babushkas" (grandmothers) I've known, doesn't complain about the lack of conveniences at the dacha. As she says, two months there mean no metro misery, and the freedom to share gardening advice and pie recipes with the other women in her dacha community.

The dacha gardens have provided more than a conversation tool for many Russian families — they have

also proved profitable. For years, Muscovites have been bringing homegrown fruits, vegetables, spices and flowers back to the city to sell in its open air markets. In recent years, as economic pressures have left many struggling to make ends meet, resourceful Russians have turned dachas into mini-farms.

With the current concern over cholera-infected imported fruit, these local goods have become ever more popular. And more pricey. Two years ago, homegrown lettuce ran about 10 cents a head in Moscow. Today that same head runs more than a dollar. But for Muscovites without dachas who are stuck in the sweaty city all summer, this fresh dacha produce is much appreciated.

It also provides the bulk of the ubiquitous Russian "zapas," an important Russian noun meaning hoard, stash or stock. Years of living under unpredictable market conditions

have taught Russians a resourcefulness rarely encountered in the United States today. As one with only secondhand stories of the Depression and war-time rationing, I am especially struck by this hoarding, as it underlines the difference between my and my Russian friends' lifestyles.

Also, given the exaggerated length of the cold season, "stocking up for the winter" has become a national pastime. Though it is easy to complain about being forced into physical intimacy with someone's sacks of peaches and barrels of homemade pickles on the train, I never cease to wonder at the gallons of pickled vegetables and jams crammed into tiny city apartments. Nothing soothes the body and soul on long January nights in gray Moscow like tea with preserves from homegrown strawberries.

This same train ride also reminded

me of my appreciation of the Russian ear for music. One group of passengers, crunched in the corner of the train car and surrounded by bunches of wildflowers, sang a medley of Russian children's songs. American folk songs and a few Edith Piaf favorites all the way back to Moscow. Several other passengers joined in on a chorus, or made requests. One elderly man burst out with a little known verse of a Russian favorite, to a near unanimous ovation. And everyone stayed remarkably on key, which is more than I can say for my own family car trips.

Rolling into Moscow that warm Sunday night, I decided that as long as I cannot spend this summer sailing up Hatchet Creek, sliding down abandoned water-ski ramps with giggling cousins and drinking iced tea on the porch, Igor and Raisa and their dacha have provided the next best thing.

Right

From Page 5C

Faced with the prospect of losing out to secular humanists (or liberal pagans as columnist Cal Thomas calls them), leaders of the Religious Right changed the message. What else could they do? If America will not choose the good news, then the good news must be imposed upon them. How do they go about accomplishing this? By means of politics, of course.

But how do they hope to gain a hearing in the political realm? If Americans are ignoring the good news of grace and forgiveness proclaimed from pulpits and Sunday School classes, why should they vote for the good news at the polls? Obviously some tactic is needed that will make the message so compelling Americans will not dare ignore it.

The tactic the Religious Right is using is the tried and true method of scapegoating.

This is how it works. First, identify what frightens people the most. Second, search around and find some tainted person or movement to blame for the fearful event. Third, trumpet loudly that these "enemies" are destroying our dreams and our way of life. Pepper the message with condemnation and judgment. After all, it's not just America that is threatened, but God's word too.

Finally, state clearly that the solution rests in electing "right-minded" candidates who will pass the "right laws" that will make America right again. The logic seems to work this way: "If we elect the right people, create the right political structures, pass and enforce the right laws, then people in America will automatically do what God wants them to do. After this, things will get better." No one seems to question the incredible assumption that the state will be able to enforce God's word.

It almost sounds too simple to work. But it does work. It is working. The climate in America is tailor-made for this tactic. The fear that the Religious Right needs to portray itself as champion of truth is thick in the air around us. As always, there are plenty of convincing scapegoats to carry the burden of blame for our national woes.

In the meantime, the preaching of good news that offers hope and forgiveness is nearly drowned out by shouts of condemnation and blame. In place of the good news is a systematic "sinner bashing" designed to create and enhance fear. With fear comes hate. And where there is hate there is good news for no one.

The original vision of the Religious Right's message was to make God's presence real in our midst. With that presence comes hope and meaning for life. The current agenda is clearly at cross purposes with that original hope. An unrelenting message of judgment and condemnation drives people away from God's presence and into the arms of despair.

It is a sad and tragic loss of vision. The original idea was a good one — it was good news. But now, only bitterness and rancor remain. Standing on the balcony of the great temple of political influence they have built, members of the Religious Right look down into the exotic garden of American life. That garden is filled, as it always has been, with the sinners in need of grace and forgiveness.

"What is that?" they shout. "Remove that hideous thing!"

With that as their resolute cry, Evangelicals celebrate the construction of a temple for the right-minded. Meanwhile, those of us who are sinners in one way or another, wonder why our evangelists have stopped bringing good news.

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Books



JOEY KENNEDY
Book Review Editor

Lots to look toward from top writers

Fall and winter (and especially the fall) are the seasons when most major fiction writers like to debut their new works. The reason is pretty simple: With winter on the way, there's less competition from the outdoors; and with Christmas around the corner, extra sales are a certainty.

And what avid reader of fiction doesn't look forward to his or her favorite author's latest work? Those readers won't be disappointed this fall.

Mega-sellers Pat Conroy, Robin Cook, Dick Francis, Stephen King, Dean Koontz, James A. Michener, Anne Rice, Sidney Sheldon, Danielle Steel and Herman Wouk all have new books coming out. But that's not all. A number of new writers are publishing important first books this fall.

It'll be a busy season. Fact is, it's already under way. We've already received review copies of Larry McMurtry's *Pretty Boy Floyd* (Simon & Schuster, \$23), written with Diana Ossana, and John Irving's *A Son of the Circus* (Random House, \$25). That's Irving's first book since *A Prayer for Owen Meany*. We'll have reviews of both in the coming weeks.

Most every fall, Stephen King has a new novel that goes on to become a No. 1 bestseller. *Insomnia* (Viking, \$27.95), due out in October, is sure to follow the pattern, but this fall the early word is that *Insomnia* is on par with *The Shining*. Let's hope so.

Horse-race-mystery-thriller writer Dick Francis returns this winter with *Wild Horses* (Putnam, \$22.95), while medical-thriller-mystery-writer Robin Cook returns in January with *Acceptable Risk* (Putnam, \$22.95).

Anne Rice continues her witches series with *Talitos: Lives of the Mafair Witches* (Knopf, \$25), due any day now.

Also due in September is Sidney Sheldon's *Nothing Lasts Forever* (Morrow, \$23), set in a San Francisco hospital.

James A. Michener keeps churning them out. *Recessional* (Random House, \$25), a story set in a Florida retirement center, comes to us in October.

Herman Wouk's *The Glory* (Little, Brown, \$24.95), sequel to *The Hope*, is scheduled for November. Also in November, Dean Koontz thrills us with *Dark Rivers of the Heart* (Knopf, \$24).

Danielle Steel flies in with *Wings* (Delacorte, \$23.95) in December. It's the story about a woman who fights the odds and becomes a famous aviatrix. And Pat Conroy honors us with *Beach Music* (Doubleday, \$27.50) in December. Can't wait for that one.

Other best-selling authors with new works out include Gail Godwin with *The Good Husband* (Ballantine, \$22.95, September); Tom Robbins with *Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas* (Bantam, \$23.95, October); Clive Barker with *Everville* (HarperCollins, \$25, October); Stephen Coonts with *The Intruders* (Pocket, \$23, October); Joseph Heller with *Closing Time* (Simon & Schuster, \$24, October); Peter Maas with *China White* (Simon & Schuster, \$23, October); Robert B. Parker with *All Our Yesterdays* (Delacorte, \$22.95, November); Jeffrey Archer with *The First Miracle* (HarperCollins, \$10, November); Judith Michael with *A Tangled Web* (Simon & Schuster, \$23, November); and Mary Higgins Clark with *The Lottery Winner* (Simon & Schuster, \$23, November).

Also, Len Deighton with *Faith* (HarperCollins, \$24, December); Stuart Woods with *Imperfect Strangers* (HarperCollins, \$23, January); Richard North Patterson with *Eyes of a Child* (Knopf, \$25, January); Susan Howatch with *Absolute Truths* (Knopf, \$25, January); P.D. James with *Original Sin* (Knopf, \$25, January); William S. Burroughs with *My Education: A Book of Dreams* (Viking, \$21.95, January); and Lillian Jackson Braun with (what else?) *The Cat Who Blew the Whistle* (Putnam, \$19.95, February).

There's more. Lots more: Mystery, science fiction, other notable general fiction and first novels. I'll cover those areas next week as I wrap up this preview of new books for fall and winter.

Joy and sorrow told in biography of Hank Williams

HANK WILLIAMS: The Biography, by Colin Escott, with George Merritt and William MacEwen. Little, Brown. 307 pages. \$22.95. Reviewed by **Anne Ruisi**

Hindsight tells us that Hank was the greatest star country music has ever known, a prize for any woman, but in December 1952, he was a falling star hanging on by a thread.

— From *Hank Williams: The Biography*.

The drugged-out musical icons of the 1960s counter-culture — Janis, Jimi and Jim — were children when the speed freak granddaddy of them all met his own untimely demise.

His health destroyed by years of addiction to alcohol and drugs, the brilliant country singer-songwriter, 29-year-old Hank Williams, was in good spirits as he checked into Birmingham's Redmont Hotel.

Within thirty minutes ... three women had invited themselves into his room. Hank asked one of them where she was from and she said, "Heaven." "Well," Hank said, "in that case, you're the very reason I'm going to Hell."

It was Dec. 30, 1952, two days before Hank's death.

In *Hank Williams: The Biography*, Colin Escott, George Merritt and William MacEwen stunningly recreate the life of the pioneering country singer in all its crushing sorrow and moments of bountiful joy.

A frail, womanizing, drug-addicted and sometimes violent alcoholic, Hank Williams was a gifted songwriter and performer whose personal demons damned him to an early grave and enduring legend.

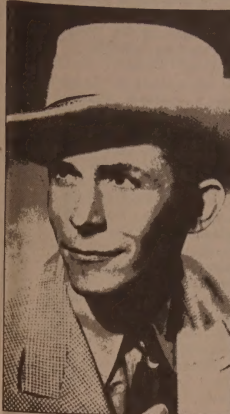
Born with a spinal defect into a poor South Alabama family, Hank's youth was spent moving from town to town as his parents scratched out a living in the 1920s.

By age 11 the boy was playing guitar on the streets of Georgiana, his father had left the family and Hank was firmly entrenched in alcoholism. Not an auspicious beginning for a spindly youngster who vowed to his cousin, "I'll sing my song and make more money than any of you."

By 1937, Hank's strong-willed mother had moved her family to Montgomery, where she ran a rooming house and teenaged Hank signed on as a performer with radio station WSFA.

The rest, as the old cliché goes, is history.

Based on the bare facts of his life — his difficult childhood, his drug and alcohol addiction, his stormy re-



lationships with women and his gruesome death in the back seat of his chauffeur-driven car — the Hank Williams story is better than anything on the racks of the supermarket tabloids.

Take into account his tremendous gift for translating his emotions into musical poetry and he becomes an icon of country music. There are classic Hank Williams' songs, like "Jambalaya" and "Your Cheatin' Heart."

But just try to listen to his heart-breakingly poignant, "Alone and Forsaken," without getting a lonesome twist in your gut.

Escott and his co-authors hit biographical pay dirt in *Hank Williams: The Biography*. It's a fine story of one of country music's brightest stars, a man whose own self-destructiveness spelled personal disaster.

Anne Ruisi covers west Birmingham for *The News*.

Halberstam hits another home run

OCTOBER 1964, by David Halberstam. Villard Books. 380 pages. \$24. Reviewed by **Tom Gordon**

If a reviewer wants to pan this book, it's going to have to be someone a lot more detached than me.

This is a baseball book, about a particular baseball season, and one of the teams involved — the St. Louis Cardinals — is one I have lived and died with almost since I knew I was alive.

My mother is from St. Louis, one of the world's great baseball towns. When she was growing up there, St. Louis had two baseball teams, the Browns in the American League and the Cardinals in the National. And working in the front office of each team were ladies named Murphy. Both Margaret and Mary Murphy were my great aunts.

Meanwhile, the stadium in which both teams played was a venerable North St. Louis facility known as Sportsman's Park, and the scent from nearby stockyards would sometimes hang over the playing field on muggy summer nights.

Before going off to World War II, my father tried out for the Cardinals. In 1948, when I was born, he was general manager of the Cardinal farm club in Houston, and we still have a baseball signed by a fellow named Stan Musial, who penned the wish that I might one day become "a major leaguer."

In the summer of '64, we lived in St. Louis. Believe me, I could go on. And on. But I'm supposed to talk about this book.

OK, I liked it partly because I love the sport that greedy owners spoiled players, artificial turf and designated hitters are tainting. I also miss the kind of great stretch

drive pennant races that both the American and National leagues had in 1964, an attraction that baseball's present-day balanced schedules and wild-card playoff teams have rendered null and void.

But sentimentality aside, I like Halberstam's device of using the season to talk about its participants as people and how the changes in baseball had their counterparts in American society. He had a somewhat similar approach in *Summer of '49*, his earlier telling of the great American League pennant race between the Yankees and the Boston Red Sox.

He details the tottering tower that the Yankees had become by 1964, partly because of the injuries that were hindering such familiar pin-stripe wearers as Mickey Mantle, Whitey Ford, Tony Kubek and Ralph Terry. But the Yankee decline was also due to arrogance and indifference, spending cuts that sapped the strength of their minor league system, and the lingering organizational prejudices that kept them from truly tapping into the vast pool of black talent that was entering the majors.

By contrast, the Cardinals of '64 were a well-integrated, rather cohesive team, in part because of the exceptional character of some of their leading players, Bill White and Bob Gibson among them.

Compared with many of today's highly paid players, these men faced much more formidable obstacles in their time, and they seemed nobler, both on and off the field. As I make my way — as a baseball fan — toward premature old fogeydom, this book helps me recall them with fondness and admiration.

Tom Gordon works on the state desk for *The News*.

Story of teen's turning point makes readable first novel

SUMMER OF THE REDEEMERS, by Carolyn Haines. Dutton. 391 pages. \$22.95. Reviewed by **Veronica Pike Kennedy**

The summer of 1963 was a turning point in the life of 13-year-old Rebekkah Rich, and her tale is richly told in this first hardcover novel by Carolyn Haines.

Summer of the Redeemers is a highly readable coming-of-age story that should find readers no matter their gender or age. The book emits an aura that is reminiscent of the turbulent decade of the Sixties and, for Americans of all political parties, that devastating day in November.

By the time school starts, Bekkah has been exposed to kidnapping, murder and racism. She has seen her parents almost separate. She has experienced the joys and sadness a best friend brings, as well as the pangs of first love. She has fought with her older brother and come to better understand a snobby acquaintance.

She sees a ghost, she learns that seeming to be religious doesn't always mean being good and that seeming to be sophisticated doesn't always mean being classy.

And, she gets a horse.

Whew. What a summer.

The book sounds like a nerve-wracking experience, and that's because it is. Carolyn Haines uses her native Mississippi as the setting for *Redeemers*. Almost everything in the book happens on Kali Okla Road, a dirt stretch that ends near an abandoned church — abandoned until The Blood of the Redeemers religious cult moves in and life in sleepy Kali Okla is nudged out of its

dream-like state.

The nudge becomes a jolt when the horse-owning cartoonist Nadine Andrews roars down the road, setting up home and stable in the neighborhood spook house.

The irrepressible and irresponsible Nadine has one thing Bekkah has dreamed of most of her short life: Horses, beautiful show horses, that draw the young girl into Nadine's shiny web like a powerful magnet.

She gets Bekkah involved in spying on the Redeemers, who value their right to privacy at any cost. As a result of her prying and her own personal agenda, Nadine exposes Bekkah to unspeakable horrors.

"It wasn't hard to steer clear of the church folks," Bekkah tells readers of *Redeemers*. "With their tall hair and gray dresses, they seemed gruesomely cheerful. No point in lying and saying they didn't prick my curiosity, they did, and I spent many a summer afternoon spying on them. But Nadine was another matter altogether. Not the threat of the Blood of the Redeemers' hellfire could have kept me from biking down to Nadine's whenever Mama Betts (Bekkah's grandmother) or Mama blinked an eye and I could shake free of them. The Redeemers were a curiosity; Nadine was a craving."

Redeemers reads as if it were written by a veteran of the pen, and it is. Ms. Haines has written several romance-type paperbacks under an assumed name. The resident of Semmes proves, however, that her writing skills are strong enough for her to make the jump into hardcover.

Veronica Pike Kennedy is a copy editor for *The News*. Carolyn Haines will visit Birmingham next week. See "authors on tour" for details.

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Books

BEST SELLERS

Hardcover FICTION

- 1. *Debt of Honor*. Tom Clancy. Putnam. \$25.95 (Reviewed Aug. 21)
- Last week: 1; Weeks on List: 2
- 2. *The Celestine Prophecy*. James Redfield. Warner. \$17.95 (Reviewed Dec. 5)
- Last week: 2; Weeks on List: 28
- 3. *The Gift*. Danielle Steel. Delacorte. \$15.
- Last week: 3; Weeks on List: 7
- 4. *The Chamber*. John Grisham. Doubleday. \$24.95 (Reviewed May 27)
- Last week: 4; Weeks on List: 14
- 5. *A Son of the Circus*. John Irving. Random House. \$25
- Last week: 7; Weeks on List: 3
- 6. *The Bridges of Madison County*. Robert James Waller. Warner. \$15.95
- Last week: 5; Weeks on List: 106
- 7. *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*. James Finn Garner. Macmillan. \$8.95 (Reviewed Aug. 14)
- Last week: 6; Weeks on List: 9
- 8. *The Alienist*. Caleb Carr. Random House. \$22 (Reviewed April 10)
- Last week: 8; Weeks on List: 22
- 9. *Until You*. Judith McNaught. Pocket Books. \$22
- Last week: 10; Weeks on List: 4
- 10. *The Hidden City*. David Eddings. Del Rey. \$23
- Last week: 13; Weeks on List: 3
- 11. *Everything to Gain*. Barbara Taylor Bradford. HarperCollins. \$24
- Last week: 9; Weeks on List: 9
- 12. *Undue Influence*. Steve Martin. Putnam. \$22.95
- Last week: 11; Weeks on List: 8
- 13. *Mutant Message Down Under*. Mario Morgan. HarperCollins. \$18
- First week on the list
- 14. *Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas*. Tom Robbins. Bantam. \$23.95
- First week on the list
- 15. *Dixie City Jam*. James Lee Burke. Hyperion. \$22.95 (Reviewed Aug. 21)
- Last week: 14; Weeks on List: 7

NON-FICTION

- 1. *In the Kitchen with Rosie*. Rosie Daley. Knopf. \$14.95
- Last week: 1; Weeks on List: 20
- 2. *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*. John Gray. HarperCollins. \$20.
- Last week: 2; Weeks on List: 75
- 3. *Embraced by the Light*. Betty J. Eadie. Gold Leaf Press. \$14.95
- Last week: 3; Weeks on List: 67
- 4. *The Kennedy Women*. Laurence Leamer. Villard. \$27.50
- Last week: 5; Weeks on List: 4
- 5. *October 1964*. David Halberstam. Villard. \$24 (Reviewed today)
- Last week: 8; Weeks on List: 4
- 6. *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. John Berendt. Random House. \$23
- Last week: 7; Weeks on List: 26
- 7. *The Tribe of the Tiger*. Elizabeth Marshall Thomas. Simon & Schuster. \$20
- Last week: 4; Weeks on List: 4
- 8. *The Book of Virtues*. William J. Bennett. Simon & Schuster. \$27.50 (Reviewed Nov. 7)
- Last week: 11; Weeks on List: 36
- 9. *Magic Eye II*. Thomas Baccell. Andrews & McNeil. \$12.95
- Last week: 9; Weeks on List: 19
- 10. *Motherless Daughters*. Hope Edelman. Addison-Wesley. \$23
- Last week: 15; Weeks on List: 6
- 11. *I Could Do Anything If I Only Knew What It Was*. Barbara Sher with Barbara Smith. Delacorte. \$19.95
- Last week: 10; Weeks on List: 2
- 12. *The Agenda*. Bob Woodward. Simon & Schuster. \$24 (Reviewed June 12)
- Last week: 6; Weeks on List: 12
- 13. *Couplehood*. Paul Reiser. Bantam. \$19.95
- First week on the list
- 14. *Magic Eye*. Thomas Baccell. Andrews & McNeil. \$12.95
- Last week: 13; Weeks on List: 32
- 15. *The Catcher Was a Spy*. Nicholas Dawidoff. Pantheon. \$23
- Last week: 14; Weeks on List: 4

Paperback MASS MARKET

- 1. *Forrest Gump*. Winston Groom. Pocket Books. \$5.50
- 2. *Without Remorse*. Tom Clancy. Berkley. \$6.99
- 3. *Nightmares and Dreamscapes*. Stephen King. Signet. \$6.99
- 4. *Smilla's Sense of Snow*. Peter Joeg. Dell. \$5.50
- 5. *Clear and Present Danger*. Tom Clancy. Berkley. \$6.99
- 6. *Gone But Not Forgotten*. Phillip Margolin. Bantam. \$6.50
- 7. *Like Water for Chocolate*. Laura Esquivel. Doubleday/Anchor. \$5.99
- 8. *Case of Need*. Michael Crichton. Signet. \$5.99
- 9. *The Client*. John Grisham. Dell. \$6.99
- 10. *Sacred Clowns*. Tony Hillerman. HarperPaperbacks. \$6.99
- 11. *Thunder Point*. Jack Higgins. Berkley. \$5.99
- 12. *The List of 7*. Mark Frost. Avon. \$5.99
- 13. *The Wyndham Legacy*. Catherine Coulter. Jove. \$5.99
- 14. *Failure to Appear*. J.A. Jance. Avon. \$9.50
- 15. *A Simple Plan*. Scott Smith. St. Martin's. \$5.99

TRADE

- 1. *The Shipping News*. E. Annie Proulx. S&S Touchstone. \$12
- 2. *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Stephen R. Covey. S&S/Frieside. \$12
- 3. *Gumpkins*. Winston Groom. Pocket Books. \$5
- 4. *Care of the Soul*. Thomas Moore. HarperPerennial. \$12
- 5. *All the Pretty Horses*. Cormac McCarthy. Vintage. \$11
- 6. *The Road Less Traveled*. M. Scott Peck. M.D. S&S/Touchstone. \$12
- 7. *Lasher*. Anne Rice. Ballantine. \$14
- 8. *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Jack Canfield & Mark Hansen, editors. Health Communications. \$12
- 9. *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. Eisenberg & Murkof. Workman. \$10.95
- 10. *Eat More, Weigh Less*. Dean Ornish, M.D. HarperPerennial. \$14
- 11. *Mama Makes You Her Mind*. Bailey White. Vintage. \$10
- 12. *Where Angels Walk*. Joan W. Anderson. Ballantine. \$10

Gen. Patton's view of Monty not necessarily the truth

MONTY THE LONELY LEADER, 1944-1945, by Al Istair Horne, with David Montgomery. HarperCollins. 381 pages. \$25.

Reviewed by Jerry Proctor

It's a pity, but most Americans have formed their opinions of British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery from a Hollywood film.

Patton, that hymn to our nation's most spectacular (and odd) World War II general, painted Montgomery as an egocentric dolt who bumbled through battles while our brilliant and beloved Gen. George S. Patton was bounced out of Third Army command and died in the doghouse.

Like most made-in-Hollywood history, it wasn't quite that way.

It's true Montgomery was egocentric. Show me someone in high command who isn't an egoist and I'll show you a fellow who should have retired a major.

But there was more, much more. Another author, Nigel Hamilton, put it like this: "His conceitedness irked even those most devoted to him, but was tolerated because, in a world of muddle and confusion, his clarity of purpose and professional approach to the 'art of war' stood out like a beacon."

Most persons alive today can't remember how catastrophically confused and muddled the world was in the spring of 1942. The Allied cause was gurgling down the drain.

In Europe, Hitler's armies had Russian forces pinned against the Volga River at Stalingrad and seemed only an inch away from total victory. In the Pacific, Japan had crippled the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor and was running wild throughout Southeast Asia. And in North Africa, German panzers had pushed the British deep into Egypt, seemingly only a heave away from capturing Cairo, the Suez Canal and the whole Middle East.

Enter Monty. In rapid-fire order the little general revived the fighting spirit of the British Eighth Army, then gave his opponent — the legendary German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel — a bloody nose and sent him packing across North Africa.

Many critics (mainly American) have belabored Monty for his slow build-ups to battle and the careful, deliberate tactics with which he waged a fight. Critics have a way of forgetting the vastly superior organization, weapons, fighting abilities and morale of the German Army of that era.

In Egypt, Montgomery pinned Rommel down at the end of a long supply line, waited until the British had amassed overwhelming superiority, then crushed the German Afrika Corps.

Another item which escapes the grasp of many is the fact Montgomery planned — and was in command of — the ground battle in Normandy. It was his strategy which pulled the German panzers onto the British front while the Americans blew a hole in the thinning line and surrounded Hitler's Seventh Army.

Normandy was a gem of set-piece tactics, perhaps the only tactics which would have won the day. They dictated that we would land, join and expand our beachheads, and begin a rapid buildup of men and materiel. Meanwhile, the enemy's reserves would be pinned down by deception and air attack.

Monty has taken bricks for the slow going of British forces in Normandy. At Supreme Headquarters he was dubbed Chief Big Wind. But in the sixth year of war, Horne writes, the British Army was weary and bled white. Attacks often failed from the troops' reluctance to do battle. Generalship was not at fault.

Like Patton, Montgomery most often got into trouble flapping his jawbont. His acerbic tongue seems to have gotten him as many enemies in the British and American forces as in the German Army. His antics after the Battle of the Bulge — when he painted himself as the savior of the American Army — almost ignited a palace revolution in Eisenhower's command.

To fix Montgomery's place in history, Horne falls back on the words of another author, A.P.J. Taylor:

"Montgomery was often tiresome and sometimes absurd. All the same, as so many have said, he was the greatest British field commander since Wellington. Perhaps this is not much of a compliment; there are so few competitors for the title."

Jerry Proctor is copy editor for The News.

Getting a look at Raymond Carver's country

The Washington Post

CARVER COUNTRY: The World of Raymond Carver, Text by Raymond Carver, photographs by Bob Adelman (Arcade, \$19.95).

These black and white photos are of landscapes from the past of the noted writer of notably bleak short stories. There are also pictures of the settings of his stories and poems, and of the kind of people who appeared in his stories — a saw-filer, for example, in the Boise Cascade plant where Carver's father worked.

Carver, who spent his childhood in Yakima, eastern Washington state, died at the age of 50 in 1988. Some of the pictures are of objects common to any part of the country, as in the illustration for Carver's poem "The Phone Booth," which begins, "She slumps in the booth, weeping into the phone. Asking a question/or two, and weeping some more."

The people in his stories are people who are likely to find themselves temporarily or indefinitely without a phone at home. Some friends are pictured, like Jerry Carrievau, model for the blind man in "Cathedral" of whom Carver wrote unflinchingly. "Too much white in the iris, for one thing, and the pupils seemed to move around in the sockets without his knowing it or being able to stop it."

SKELETON KEY: A Dictionary for Dead Heads, by David Shenk and Steve Silberman (Doubleday, \$14.95).

With tens of thousands of fanatically loyal fans, ticket receipts Spielberg would envy and a career that spans three decades, there's little doubt that the Grateful Dead are a

true rock 'n' roll phenomenon. Any remaining sceptics should pick up this book, a compendium of the lingo, lore and arcanæ associated with the band and the tie-dyed multitudes who follow it from city to city.

A lot of this is strictly for aficionados.

Sunday Crossword Puzzle and Cryptograms

09/04/94

COMING AND GOING

By Harold B. Counts

ACROSS

- 1 In this manner
- 5 Red planet
- 9 Locked up
- 14 Nautical word
- 16 One who takes as one's own
- 20 By oneself
- 21 Troublesome fix
- 23 Moves laboriously
- 24 Stone structures used as breakwaters
- 25 Contend
- 26 Mark with furrows
- 28 Poor grade
- 29 Gray or Browning
- 30 Flaxes
- 32 Alphabet run
- 33 Construction item
- 34 Piggery
- 35 Red carpet kin
- 38 "And — off!" (race call)
- 40 — wheeler (trike)
- 41 Actor Richard
- 42 "— of robins..."
- 43 Saw eye to eye
- 45 Pet
- 47 Svelte
- 48 Woo
- 49 Hearts
- 50 Shoot the breeze
- 54 — were the days...
- 55 Storage box
- 56 Bert and —
- 57 Rotter
- 58 Joins
- 59 Principal role
- 60 Enlist again

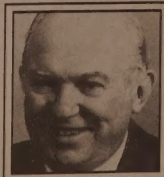
- 61 Cuthroat
- 62 — Arbor
- 63 Dirties
- 64 Kelly and
- 66 "The — Mutiny"
- 67 Rorqual
- 69 Whined
- 70 Transparent marine creature
- 71 Chickpea
- 72 Hobbes
- 74 Emphasize
- 75 Plant insect
- 77 Napoleon's isle
- 78 Ornamental hangings
- 79 More recent
- 81 Sonora "so long"
- 83 — Na Na
- 86 Baba and MacGraw
- 87 Priestly wear
- 89 Foretells
- 90 Masticate
- 91 Blemish
- 92 Pullover
- 95 Antiquity
- 96 Ice
- 97 Swelling
- 99 Hemingway novel
- 102 Had a meal
- 103 Naval officer
- 104 Cleans the blackboard
- 105 Administer extreme unction to, old style
- 106 Heads
- 107 Social appointment

DOWN

- 1 Doctrine
- 2 Speeds
- 3 Phevi
- 4 Used a spade
- 5 Managed to get along
- 6 Bustle
- 7 Rogers and Clark
- 8 Vetoed
- 9 Promontory
- 10 "— the King's Men"
- 11 Donat film
- 12 Makes beloved
- 13 Nickname for Utah
- 14 In progress
- 15 Aviator Post
- 17 Headwear
- 18 Authoritative proclamation
- 19 "Take — Not Taken" (Frost)
- 21 Elec. units
- 22 Shrink from pain
- 23 Asian holiday
- 30 Tam
- 31 Daubs
- 33 Sonja of skating
- 35 Question word
- 36 White heron
- 37 West and Murray
- 39 Share equally
- 40 Secure tightly
- 41 One-seeded fruit
- 44 Song of yesterday
- 45 Campus figures
- 46 Long denunciation
- 47 Cuts
- 49 Swiss cottage
- 51 Burden

CAIS RAIN BOAS EMMA
LURE ALONG NAIVE NEAP
OTIC MOTOR ELLEN RAZE
GOODIE FOWSEWAY HOBSTER
DIST NODIA CEROC
SAMITE PHAT MARIGOLDS
AGATE RANDOM ROTTE ERE
INKY COMEALONGWAY AYN
NEE GADIZ HOOO SADAT
TWOSONES BOAR ISO
NEWS HEADWAY OMIT
LEA TRICK EMPATHIC
LISTS NENO PSEUD EMU
UANA MAND MEANS SWAR
RAN AND YEARS STAGE
KEYSTONES BRED STAYED
TRIG OTIS CHUG
BARREN RUBINWRONGWAY
AGUE QUARA ANEAR ERLE
BASS REVER TONNE RAISA
ARTIS REED WIED SPIAR

Listen to your ear when it comes to prepositions



James J. Kilpatrick
WRITER'S ART

Letters continue to come in — though not so often as they used to come in — from readers who believe that a preposition must never appear at the end of a sentence. This is a rule implanted by ignorant pedagogues of another time. The supposed rule is no rule at all.

This is what we are talking about:

■ From *Time* magazine, last January: "Then Kerrigan took off for California to shoot a Reebok commercial — just the sort of lucrative deal Harding dreams of."

■ From columnist Ellen Goodman, also writing about ice skater Tonya Harding: "She was also abused by her husband, whom she divorced but then moved back in with."

■ From *USA Today*, last November, discussing political junkies: "It's a topic that Sunday's *New York Times* magazine devoted a cover story to."

It would take a truly tin-eared writer to believe these perfectly acceptable sentences would be improved by recasting them. "Just the sort of lucrative deal of which Harding dreams?" Aaargh! "... by her husband whom she divorced but back in with whom she then moved?" Double aaargh! "It's a topic to which Sunday's *New York Times* magazine devoted a cover story?" Gracious!

Such stilted constructions grievously offend the writing art. The venerable H.W. Fowler condemned them long ago. For a Horrid Example he used the sentence, "That depends on what they are cut with."

The sentence is not improved, said Fowler, by "That depends on with what they are cut."

Let us cease worrying about a "rule" that never was a rule. It is not something we have to live with.

On something else entirely: Some months ago I staunchly defended Meg Greenfield for a sentence in one of her fortnightly essays for *Newsweek*. She was writing about the fiasco that developed when President Clinton nominated Bobby Inman to become secretary of defense. Pub-

lic figures, she said, ought not to be thin-skinned.

"I mean that they have to establish, if you will, some kind of hard-shelled comfort level under attack ..."

The controversy developed over her little phrase, "if you will." I found nothing amiss in the usage. I thought it a civil insertion, a kind of grace note, a spot of oil to lubricate the wheels of discourse. A number of surly readers wrote in to say that "if you will" was a waste of words and space.

Well, the last word comes from Meg Greenfield herself. She wants no defense, staunch or otherwise. She writes:

"I side with those who are against 'if you will.' It is an arch phrase that I believe I hadn't used before and one that I habitually edit out of other people's copy. It was there to call attention to the phrase 'comfort level,' which Inman himself had used in another context. But it was too cute, even coy, and shouldn't have been there at all."

Harumph! Despite Meg's renunciation, I will not retreat. To be sure, there are times when such an inoffensive interpolation is out of place.

But I persist in making my original point. We do not have to write bare-knuckled prose all the time. Sometimes it is nice to wear gloves.

James J. Kilpatrick, former editor of *The Richmond News-Leader*, has written for years about usage of the English language.

Cryptograms

1. DEFENDS REALMS KNSM BETCABSEX

KMISMIX V HRFVS BMEXC DMEAPC HI

CNUNTNDMIC EX VALUITSIC. —By Ed Huddleson

2. JHBSSAW TCKJ HDYS,QLHH KD EBKA

SCWH JCKKCY S CY QHALETAWJ.

—By Earl Ireland

3. CV X YAP HANDY ROSTOR NH PSANDY

SANDY UA CUR LANDYR, XSO ULOE

FCTCDP UAA LCPLFE AVV ULO LAP?

—By Duane H. McGogy

4. FACTORY SNAACK LDYO KLYYP RAAGUY

RIPPYF RIXXNYK LUPD ANX SUKRIUP

STGYF.

—By Frank N. Stein

Last Week's Cryptograms

- 1. Farmer from Arkansas fails in attempt to plant alfalfa in Alaska.
- 2. Aerodynamic principles say it should be impossible for the bumblebee to fly.
- 3. Fluorescent lights save voltage and maybe my human energy; bulbs need changing less often.
- 4. Doc orders powerful cereal for sick patient. He sure knows his oats!



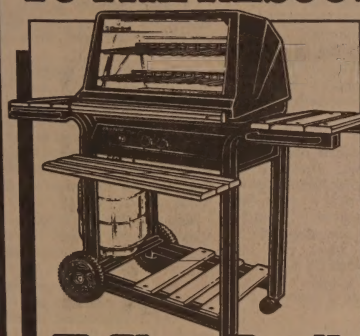
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(4199956)

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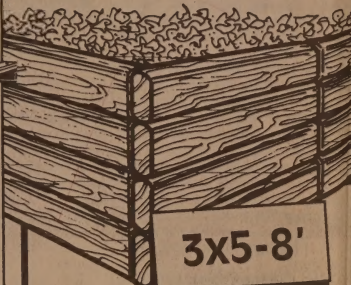
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177
(4090247)

#3 POT

677
(4090221)

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(4800850)

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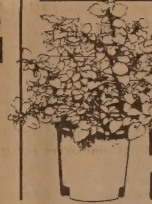
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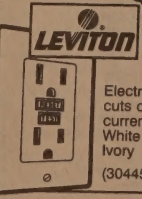


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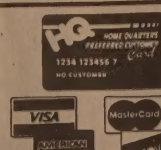
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